

Autosport

A Haymarket publication

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT
SILVERSTONE'S 30 YEARS

26th January 1978 30p



F1 Arrows for Brazil



International rallies: Ford v Fiat

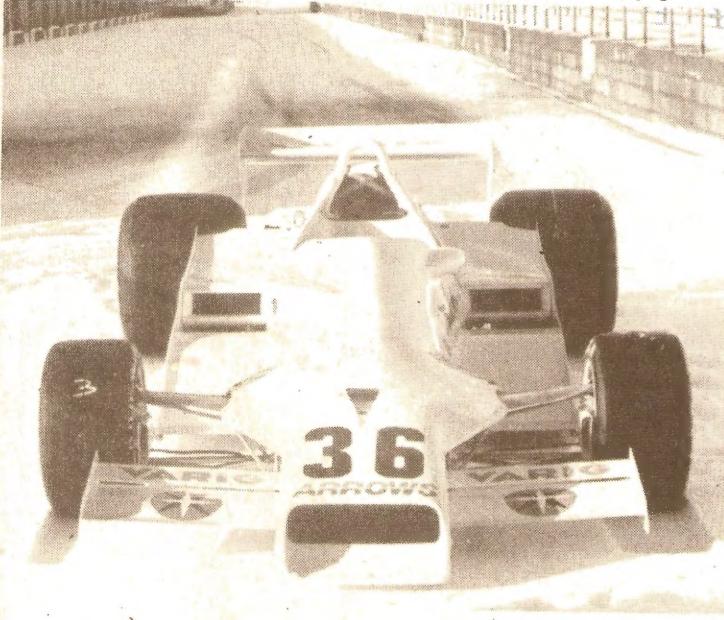
Monte Carlo progress □ Brabham's Gordon Murray □ New VW Derby

this week

- 2 Pit & Paddock
- 5 Racecard
- 9 New Cars: The Volkswagen Derby
- 10 1948 RAC GP: A day to remember
- 14 German G5: A national alternative
- 16 Correspondence
- 17 Interview: Brabham F1 designer Gordon Murray
- 22 Special Stage
- 26 World Rally Championship: A two-horse race
- 34 Testing Year: John Bolster reviews the cars of 1977
- 42 Sports Extra
- 46 Sportscard
- 47 Weekend Sport

Insert Supplement: Silverstone's 30 years

The new F1 Arrows at a snowy Silverstone last week—more pictures, page 3.



Editor: Quentin Spurring. Assistant Editor: Robin Bradford. Sports Editor: Nigel Roebuck. Technical Editor: John Bolster. Assistant Editor (Rallies): Ann Bradshaw. International Rallies Editor: Henry Liddon. Club Editor: Marcus Pye. Chief Photographer: Jeff Bloxham. Editorial Assistant: Linda McRae.

American Editor: Gordon Kirby. European Editor: Jeff Hutchinson. Midlands Representative: Derek Hill. Correspondents: Scotland, Bill Henderson; Northern Ireland, Ester Crawford; Eire, Brian Foley; Canada, Chris Waddell; New Zealand, Peter Greenslade; Australia, Bob Jennings.

Advertisement Manager: Mike Trew. Group Advertisement Director: Derek Redfern.

Publishing Director: Simon Taylor.

Published every Thursday by: Haymarket Publishing Ltd, 76 Dean St, London W1A 1BU. Telephone: Editorial, 01-734 4242; Advertising, 01-439 6016. Telex: 23918 Haymarket LDN. Subscriptions and back numbers: Craven House, 34 Foubert's Place, London, W1.

Annual subscriptions: Home, £22.50; Overseas, surface mail, £22.50; Airmail, Europe, £30.00; Airmail, USA and Canada, £40. Other airmail rates on application.

Printed in England by: David Brockdorff Ltd, Forest Road, London, E17. Colour sections printed by: B. R. Hubbard Ltd, Callywhite Lane, Dronfield, Sheffield. Registered at the PO as a newspaper.



Reprinting in whole or part of any matter appearing in AUTOSPORT is forbidden, except by permission of the publishers © AUTOSPORT 1978.

Silverstone salute

We have produced a special supplement to this issue to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of Silverstone, the Northamptonshire airfield circuit which staged its first motor race meeting in 1948. We are proud that AUTOSPORT can boast a staff writer who actually took part in that event, namely our Technical Editor, John Bolster. JVB finished sixth in the 1948 RAC British Grand Prix at Silverstone at the wheel of an ERA, and he has been persuaded (rather easily, as a matter of fact) to recall the event in an article which starts on page 10.

When post-war British motor racing first stirred at Silverstone thirty years ago, the circuit was under lease to the RAC from the Ministry of Defence. The British Racing Drivers' Club took over the running of the circuit in 1952, and formed Silverstone Circuits Ltd in 1966. Four years later, the BRDC Group acquired the freehold of the circuit land, and there are now many plans for Silverstone which make the future look very bright indeed.

Silverstone has always been run with one objective above all others: to promote motor racing in Britain. In the pursuit of this aim, the circuit operating company has been very fortunate in that its primary responsibility to its shareholders—who are, of course, the members of the BRDC—has been to show a sufficient operating profit at the end of each year in order to enable further investment to be made. This responsibility has been regularly and successfully met, and at the same time Silverstone Chief Executive Jimmy Brown and his team have been able to promote the cause of 'pure' motor racing in a most satisfactory manner.

That part of this promotion of the sport has been seen as declaring its loyalty to motor racing's governing bodies is very evident from Silverstone's record. When the FIA has created a new category for use in an officially sanctioned World or European championship series, for example, the management at Silverstone has been able and, more often than not, willing to give it every chance of success. On many occasions in the recent past, Silverstone and the BRDC have been justly praised for the extent of their commitment to the sport, and they continue to stage more FIA championship events than any other British circuit.

Silverstone is a great and popular circuit, and the 'atmosphere' of the place has few equals anywhere in the world. But it is essentially the forward-thinking attitude of the people who run it for which all of us involved in the sport of motor racing in this country should be grateful.

cover picture

Top: Dave Wass, Alan Rees, Jackie Oliver and Tony Southgate stand behind Riccardo Patrese's Arrows at the car's unveiling last week. The Italian debuts the car at Ritor this weekend. Photo: Jeff Bloxham.

Bottom: Winners of the World Rally Championship last year were Fiat. Here the team's anchor-man, Simo Lampinen, drives his Fiat Abarth 131 in last year's Swedish Rally. Photo: Hugh Bishop.

next week

Can Mario Andretti make it two out of two on Sunday? Full report of the Brazilian Grand Prix—Will the Renault 5 Alpines hold on? Full coverage of the Monte Carlo Rally—Road test of the TVR Taimar—Review of off-track motor sport in 1977*

*These items were correct at the time of going to press.

Heat and humidity problems at Rio

This weekend's Brazilian Grand Prix looks like being a test of stamina more than anything else. The new Riotor circuit is apparently extremely exposed and a track temperature of 55 deg C has been recorded during the past few days! Somebody apparently stuck a thermometer into the cockpit of Reutemann's Ferrari immediately after a series of quick laps, and the reading was 70 deg C! In case your O-Level days are long gone, let us remind you that water boils at 100 deg C...

The track is apparently very bumpy, with a lot of third-gear constant-radius corners. "As soon as I saw it," said Bernie Ecclestone, "I said that the place had been designed for Colin

Chapman!" So it's very much a Lotus circuit? "I reckon Mario and Ronnie will be a second and a half quicker than anyone else," replied Bernie. The Brabham boss agreed that it would be a very tough race, that the extreme heat and humidity would favour those with a lot of stamina, like Scheckter, Andretti and Reutemann.

In the meantime, all the drivers are training hard, Patrick Tambay, for instance, playing two hours of tennis every day—without a drink! But Mario Andretti predictably returned to Pennsylvania after Argentina, and has had difficulty getting out of his house. It is surrounded by three feet of snow...

Bernie: "Rio was just designed for Lotus".



Lole tests at Rio

Sunday morning's radio news carried an item about Ferrari testing at Rio, suggesting that Carlos Reutemann's car had struck one of the mechanics in pit lane, the man being 'very seriously injured'. The incident did, in fact, take place, but the mechanic, Pietro Corradini, suffered only a dislocated shoul-

der, we are pleased to report.

Both drivers took part in the tests, Reutemann getting down to 1m 42.2s, Villeneuve to 1m 43.3s. During his tests there in December, Niki Lauda took the Brabham round in 1m 42.6s, claiming that he was driving with quite a lot in hand...

No Renault F3 yet — Toyota for Prost

Although we were singing the praises of Renault's return to Formula 3 a couple of weeks ago, it looks as if we'll have to wait a little while before we see the French company on the victory rostrum.

Plans to run one of Tico Martini's MK21 chassis (with Renault power) for last year's Formule Renault Europe champion Alain Prost have hit problems. Overheating problems have been experienced during winter tests on the dynamometer of Marcel Dudot, a well-known and respected Renault engine builder for many years now. In fact, Dudot produced Renault's last Formula 3 engine (a push-rod 1600cc unit taken from the 16TS model), used by Messrs Depailler, Jabouille, Leclerc and Senni in their Alpine A360s back in the early seventies before becoming involved, inevitably, with Formule Renault.

Taken from the Renault 20TS, the new engine suffers, like the existing Triumph Dolomite and BMW F3 engines, from having a single cam to operate all the valves whereas the redoubtable Toyota (developed by Novamotor in Italy) utilises a more efficient twin-cam system.

Francois Guiter, Competitions Director of Elf, told one of our correspondents recently that, while development with the engine continues, Prost will have a Toyota-powered Martini to start off the season. We also got the impression that the Renault Competitions Department were a little peeved that their hierarchy gave the go-ahead for an officially recognised F3 engine. They felt that they already had enough on their plate with the Le Mans and F1 projects...



Stommelen changes sides.

Rolf's G5 Toyota

"It is possible that I might do some Formula 1 races for the Arrows team—but that really depends on Gunnar Nilsson's health," Rolf Stommelen was talking to journalists at Paul Ricard last week, the reason for his visit being to test the turbocharged Toyota Celica which he will drive in the German Group 5 Championship this year.

"That is my first priority," said Rolf. "I shall probably drive a works Porsche at Le Mans and it's also possible that I shall do some races for Georg Loos." Stommelen drove a Porsche 935 for Loos last year, winning the 'big' division of the German G5 Championship. His new mount, Joseph Schnitzer's Toyota turbo, was handled last year by Harald Ertl, who moves to a BMW for 1978. As last year the car will be sponsored by Rodenstock, who make up-market sunglasses.

Ertl appeared with the car at mid-season in 1977, its first race being at Hockenheim, the day before the German GP. Although not able to run with the quickest Porsches, the Toyota's early showings were very promising and having Stommelen in the car must be worth something. Schnitzer reckons that the engine is now producing better than 600bhp, and, at 860kg, is considerably lighter than a 935. Stommelen believes that it will be extremely competitive on twisty circuits but still doubts that it will stay with a Porsche on the very fast tracks. The KKK turbo boost is adjustable from the cockpit.

While the team were at Paul Ricard, the weather was very wet, and Rolf had very little opportunity to try the car. However, it is a certainty that he will be something of a thorn in the side of Porsche in the German G5 Championship. But doesn't the very idea of Stommelen driving against Porsche seem curious?

Leyland limited

British Leyland's motor racing plans make up rather a slim volume this year. Throughout the winter we have hoped to hear words to the effect that the Jaguar XJS would be the cornerstone of their plans for 1978, but no. On a major scale their plans are confined to a Dolomite Sprint, which will be run by Broadspeed. Once more, the car will be driven by Tony Dron.

Kyalami latest

As we went to press, there was still no definite word about the South African Grand Prix. At the beginning of every year, it seems, we hear that the race is in financial difficulties and may have to be cancelled, and cynics have greeted the latest news as nothing more than a means of raising more sponsorship money.

The organisers are currently seeking government aid for the race, and meetings have taken place between them and the South African Minister of Sport, Piet Koornhof. So far nothing has been agreed, but Bernie Ecclestone told us on Tuesday that he was confident that the race would take place.

Ferrari F2 tests

Elio de Angelis and Beppe Gabbiani have been putting in some very respectable lap times with the prototype Formula 2 Chevron-Ferrari B40 at the Fiorano test track during the past couple of weeks. Both drivers have been under Ricardo Patrese's F2 'record' of 1m 14.72s set last year in his Chevron-BMW B40. De Angelis's best was a full second faster, using one of Ferraris latest Dino V6 engines.

Clay for Mercedes?

Continental sources insist that Mercedes-Benz are about to return to racing with a Group 5 car based on the C-111 rotary-engined car. This one, however, is to be powered by a new aluminium 5-litre V8, and it is said that Clay Regazzoni has been hired to do the testing.

Elgh's NZ Chevron

A telephone call in the middle of last week to Eje Elgh from Fred Opert in New Zealand meant that, within minutes, the Swedish driver was catching a plane for a 12,000-mile trip.

Opert had asked Elgh to come out and take over Keijo Rosberg's Chevron for the final meeting in the Peter Stuyvesant Formula Pacific series this weekend. However, the deal may have hit a snag.

Opert's original intention was that if Rosberg had clinched the series last weekend at Teretonga, the Finn would be free to drive a Japanese Kojima in the Brazilian Grand Prix on Sunday and therefore his car would have to be handed over to Elgh. However, Rosberg's pending jump-start penalty (see *Racecard*) has meant that, if he misses this weekend's event at Wigram, Larry Perkins could snatch the title from under his nose.

Atlantic prospects

The prospects for this year's Canadian Formula Atlantic series get better all the time. The proposed schedule appeared in *Racecard* last week, and we are now told that further races may be added.

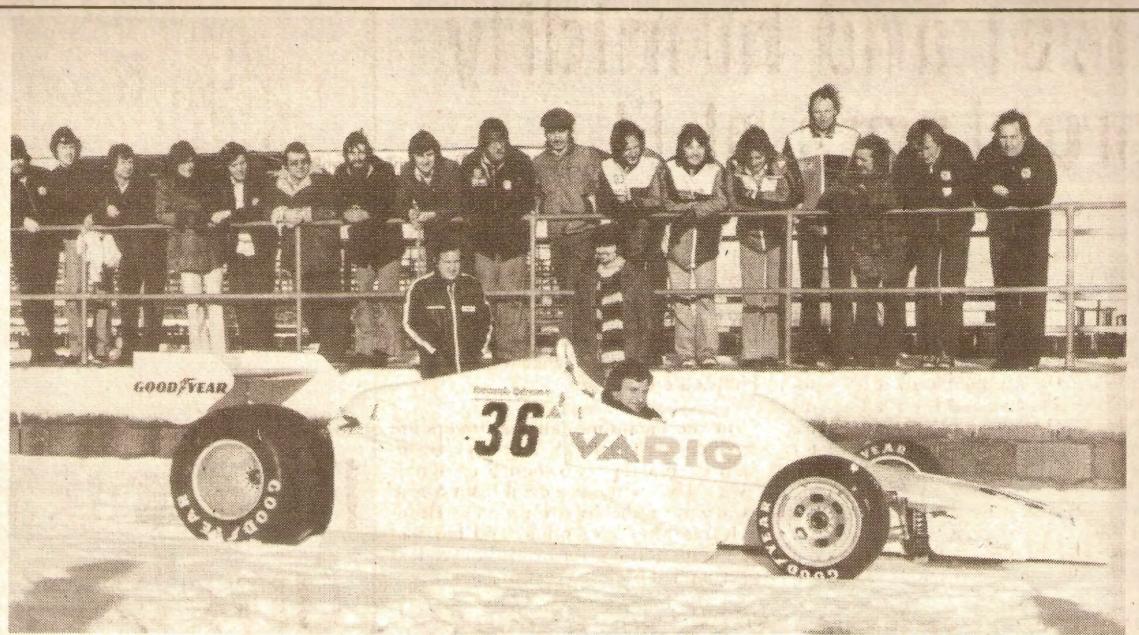
One of these is likely to be run at Mid-Ohio, and another at Winnipeg. There is also the possibility of a round at Montreal, but this is very much dependent on the politics currently surrounding the Canadian Grand Prix. It now seems almost certain that if the GP is held at all, it will be on a new street circuit in Montreal, taking in the grounds of Expo '67. Labatt's, the brewery which sponsors the race, is currently involved in negotiations to this end. If the Grand Prix comes off, a round of the Atlantic series will almost certainly precede it—as will be the case at Long Beach in April. Street circuits really are on the rampage in Canada just now. As well as the American round at Long Beach, there will be further street races at Hamilton, Quebec City, Winnipeg, Montreal and Trois Rivieres (which does not count for the championship, of course).

There is every indication that this year's series will be every bit as frantic and competitive as in the past. Gilles Villeneuve has departed the scene, of course, to drive for Ferrari, but his place in the Ecurie Canada March will be taken by Pryce Cobb, the young Texan who won at Trois Rivieres last year, and rumours have it that a second team car may be driven by Jean-Pierre Jarier, this dependent on his F1 arrangements. Further Marches will be driven by Bill Brack (again with STP backing), Danny Sullivan, Jeff Wood (last season's Rookie of the Year), Howdy Holmes and, according to Canadian sources, Stephen South. Apparently South's drive is conditional upon BP Britain's ability to persuade BP Canada that this is a good idea.

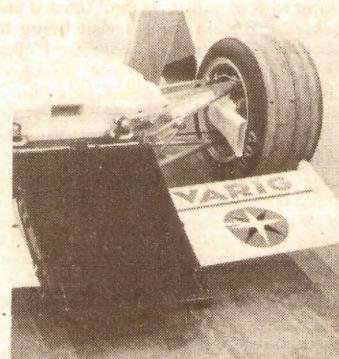
As usual, Fred Opert Chevrons will figure prominently, and these will be driven by Keke Rosberg and Eje Elgh. A third car will also run, but the driver has yet to be chosen. All three cars will be sponsored by the Julius Schmidt company. Rick Shea Racing will run a Chevron for Ian Ashley, who apparently also to have occasional F1 drives with somebody this year, sponsored in this by Godfrey Bilton once more. The leading Ralt runners are expected to be Bobby Rahal, Chip Mead and Kevin Cogan.

Dougall's March 782

Last year's Formula Ford 2000 'king', South African Rad Dougall, saw his team from last year, the Toleman Group, take delivery of their first Formula 2 March-BMW 782 at the end of last week. The team's back-up car is expected later this week. Although yet to be announced officially, Dougall's F2 team is expected to be based at BMW GB's new Kidlington workshops under the auspices of Tom Walkinshaw. Dougall is also reckoned to be driving a G1 BMW in the RAC Touring Car series along with Norman Dickson and Frank Sytner.

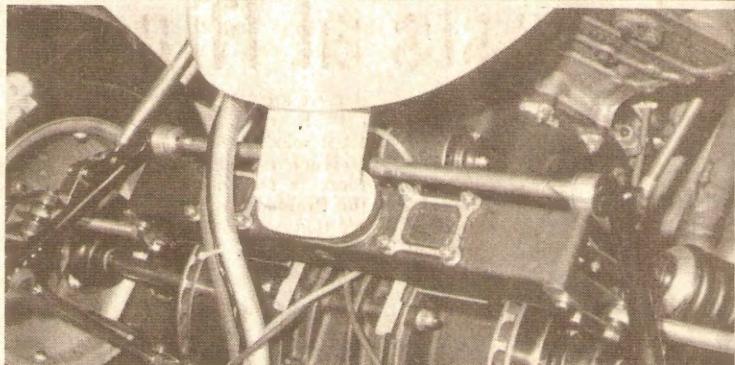


Arrows ready on schedule



The entire Arrows team was at Silverstone to witness the fruits of their labours, producing a brand new Formula 1 car in 53 days from scratch.

Top: The FA/1 had a chilly birth at Silverstone last week. Above, left: The Arrows has a front-mounted radiator. So far, the Varig sponsorship is for the Brazilian Grand Prix only. Above, right: The side 'wings' can be removed in about an hour, making the car extremely adaptable for different types of circuit. Right: The ducting underneath the engine cowling feeds cold air to the rear brakes.



F1 versus USAC—the costs

An interesting conversation took place the other day between Harvey Hudes, whose Mosport Park circuit seems now to have lost the Canadian Grand Prix for good, and our American Editor.

"To put on a World Championship Grand Prix is now a matter of \$1,000,000 up front," said Hudes. Consequently he is becoming ever more enthusiastic about the prospects for Mosport's USAC race, to be held in June. This, he says, will cost him a quarter of the F1 figure, or less. Bearing in mind the cost of an Offenhauser or Cosworth DFX engine against a normally-aspirated DFV, this seemed altogether remarkable.

Some time ago, we heard a buzz that the British USAC races were also costing less to stage than comparable F1 races—even with the enormous costs of transporting the whole circus from the States. This seemed so incredible that

we decided to speak to John Webb about it. We began by mentioning Hudes's remarks.

"No, that sounds all wrong to me," said John. "In fact, I can tell you the costs, chapter and verse. For the two British USAC rounds, my bill for the direct costs—transportation, prize money and so on—will be £400,000. If we were bringing them over for one race only, I suppose it would cost me around £300,000. As a comparison, the same costs for the Grand Prix this year will be about £350,000, although there is, of course, no trans-Atlantic transportation involved in that figure. If there were, I suppose that would add another £100,000 or so."

For Hudes, of course, the opposite applies. Very high transportation costs arise from taking the F1 circus over to North America, whereas USAC costs are obviously far less. "I think USAC, like the F1 people, have become much

more aware of what they should be getting," Webb concluded.

There is no doubt his tremendous enthusiasm for the British USAC races. The response from everyone has apparently been tremendous, and Webb is confident that Foyt, Rutherford, the Unsers, Johncock, Sneva *et al* will be on the grid at Silverstone on September 30. A USAC deputation is to visit London shortly and we hope to have the opportunity of talking with them about their plans.

Dick King, of USAC, told our American Editor some time ago that he saw no logical reason why USAC Championship racing should not ultimately spread its wings into a worldwide series. A while ago, there was talk of a round at Hockenheim this year. It will not now take place, but the German circuit organisers are keen on the idea, and a race may well take place in 1979.

Briefly . . .

Announced recently in France was the 'Toto' Roche Formula 3 championship, in memory of this legendary French motor racing figure who died several years ago. Included in the qualifying rounds are F2 races at Pau (May 15), Rouen (June 18) and Nogaro (July 9), all of which support the F2 events previously planned at these venues. The full list of dates will be announced shortly.

Paulo Pavanello, the Italian March importer who was the 'P' in the now defunct AFMP-Europacing operation, is hoping to run the reigning European Formula 3 champion Piercarlo Ghinzani and Gianfranco Brancatelli in F2 March-BMW 782s this year.

Still looking for a way into Formula 1 is former French F2 ace Michel Leclerc. He has backing from Elf and has been having further talks with Team Ensign, themselves without a fuel sponsor now that Castrol have withdrawn their support.

A story in one of last Sunday's newspapers suggested that Divina Galica's mother will be making a serious effort at trying to convince her daughter to withdraw from motor racing when she returns from the Brazilian Grand Prix this weekend.

Motor Race Consultants ask us to point out that all competitors in the Aurora AFX Formula 1 Championship must register with them.

Out now is the latest edition of the FIA Yearbook, all 788 pages of it. Unquestionably the most authoritative motor sport reference book in the world, it has now been around for 11 years. Whatever did we all do before it was published? If you're serious about motor racing, you won't need telling about it, but everything is there, from international dates to regulations to addresses to circuit diagrams. . . . At £6.50, it's an absolute steal.

The Shenstone & District Car Club ask us to tell you that their annual dinner dance will be held at the Belfry, Sutton Coldfield, on Friday, February 10. The Guests of Honour include Ronnie Peterson, John Watson, Derek Bell, John Fitzpatrick and Tim Schenken, and the cabaret stars Frank Carson. Tickets, at £9.50 each, are available from John Parsons, 69 Belwell Lane, Sutton Coldfield.

The Goodyear airship 'Europa' will be returning to the UK this summer, and is scheduled to put in an appearance at Brands Hatch on Grand Prix day.

More on the Ford-powered F1 Ligier rumour. According to French sources, it seems that this could be a very real possibility in 1978. Why? Jean-Luc Lagadere of *Engins Matra* wants the company back into full-time Grand Prix racing alongside their arch-rivals Renault.

Roy Thomas's Titan race engines concern, who are developing a Formula 3 version of the Chevrolet Vega single-cam engine and have claimed a power output of over 170bhp, expect to have an Irishman using it in F3 this coming year. David Kennedy's name has been mentioned.

After more than three years as Press/Promotions Officer of Silverstone Circuits Ltd, Robert Fearnall, formerly Deputy Editor of *AUTOSPORT*, leaves at the end of this month to become Public Relations Manager of Donington Park Racing Ltd. Succeeding Fearnall at Silverstone will be Ian Wagstaff.

Manfred Winkelhock and Marc Surer—sparring partners in last year's BMW 'Junior' Group 5 team—are both in England this week to take delivery of their new March 782s, which will be campaigned in the European Formula 2 Championship under the BMW Junior Team Polifac banner. Both drivers intend to commence testing the BMW-powered machines at Silverstone within the next few days. Winkelhock will, of course, be experiencing Formula 2 for the first time in his career.

AN APOLOGY

We have been asked to make it clear that *AUTOSPORT* does not associate itself with remarks (said to have been made at the Ferrari press conference at Modena) concerning Bernie Ecclestone, and reported in an article *Ferrari on Formula 1* in our issue of January 12, 1978. The author of the article, Doug Nye, was not present personally at this press conference, and therefore cannot confirm or deny what was said, but he relied for his article on a transcript of the press conference supplied from Italy. We wish to apologise to Bernie Ecclestone for the inclusion of the remarks in the article.

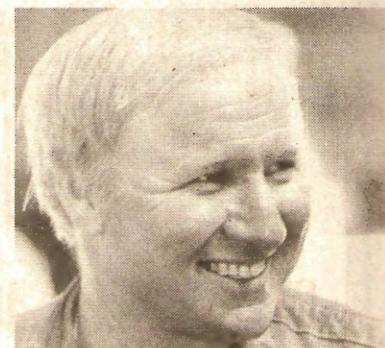
Citicorp one-two at Riverside

Reigning Winston Grand National Champion Cale Yarborough started his title defence in the best possible way last Sunday, winning the Riverside 500, the first NASCAR race of the season.

On the pole was David Pearson in the Woods Brothers' Purolator Mercury. Generally regarded as the best road circuit driver in NASCAR, Pearson fought a hard battle with Yarborough's FNCB Oldsmobile throughout the 500kms, but Cale began to edge away towards the end, mainly because of quicker pit stops. At the flag, it was actually Benny Parsons (in an FNCB Chevelle) who took second spot, just a second behind Yarborough. Third, less than a second behind Parsons, was Pearson, followed by Neil Bonnett's Jim Stacy Dodge, Dave Marcis's J. C. Osterlund Chevrolet and Hershel McGriff's Ford.

Richard Petty, driving a brand-new Dodge, was running fourth with just 13 of the 119 laps left to run, when he suffered diff failure. And Bobby Allison, at the wheel of Bud Moore's new Ford, retired with a broken valve after only 40 laps.

Yarborough's average speed was



Cale—still on top.

102.27mph. For his new sponsors, First National City, he could scarcely have done a better job. It's a long time since any sponsor has had a 1-2 finish in NASCAR. For the first time, Cale was driving an Oldsmobile rather than his usual Chevrolet, although the 'Olds' did have a Chev engine. Apparently the new Oldsmobile has better aerodynamics than the new Chevrolet. Next on the schedule is the legendary Daytona 500, on February 19.

Rosberg and Riley score at Manfeild

By the time rounds 5 and 6 of New Zealand's Peter Stuyvesant international series for Formula Pacific cars had been decided at the Manfeild circuit on January 15, the score was Keke Rosberg four, the rest two. The other winners had been Steve Millen (Chevron B42), who won a race at the first meeting at Bay Park, Mount Maunganui, and Brett Riley (March 76B), who walked away with the first of the two Manfeild races after Rosberg's Fred Opert-entered Chevron B39 was sidelined after eight laps; a valve spring in the team's 'demon' BDA, which had been fitted the previous night, let go. Riley was trailed home by Opert-entered Bobby Rahal (Chevron B39), Larry Perkins (Ralt RT1), Danny Sullivan (March 77B) and Ken Smith (March 76B).

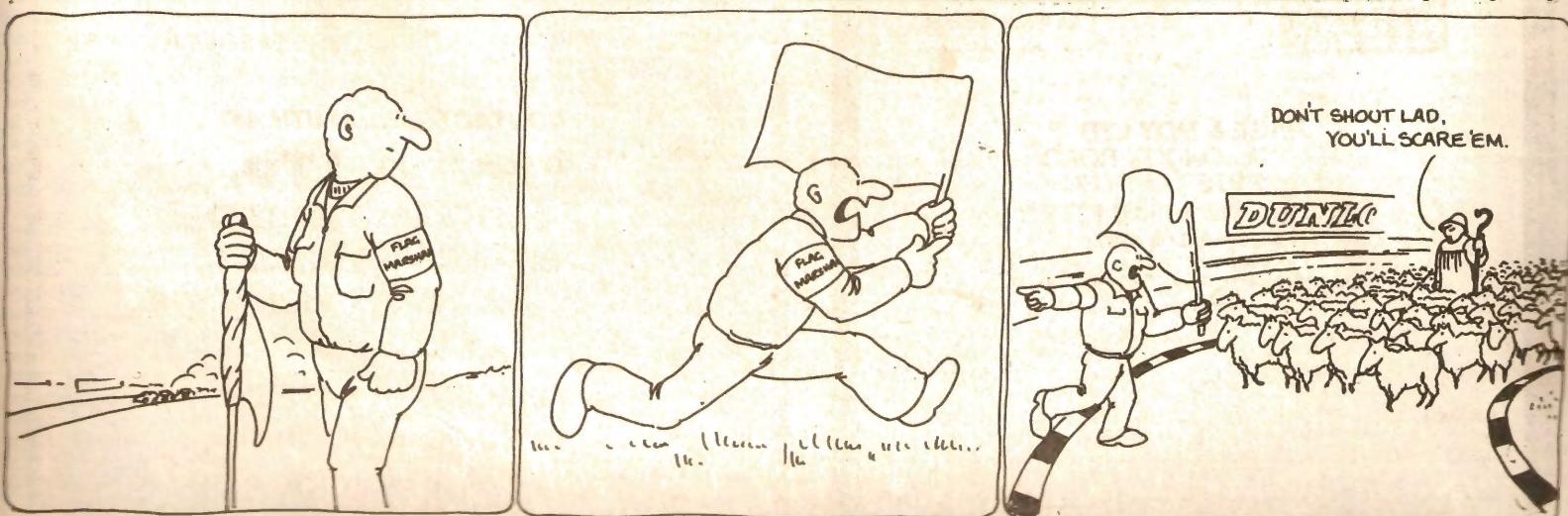
Before those placings were even posted, Opert's spannermen were replacing Rosberg's engine, and he was there on the grid for the rolling start within a couple of hours of the conclusion of the first race. This time it was the Finn all the way, and his American team-mate Rahal came home second with Sullivan, Dave McMillan (Ralt RT1), Perkins and Richard Melville (March 76B) in the other points scoring places.

Practice, which comprised a couple of sessions during which the contestants qualified for the starting positions, is

by Barry Foley

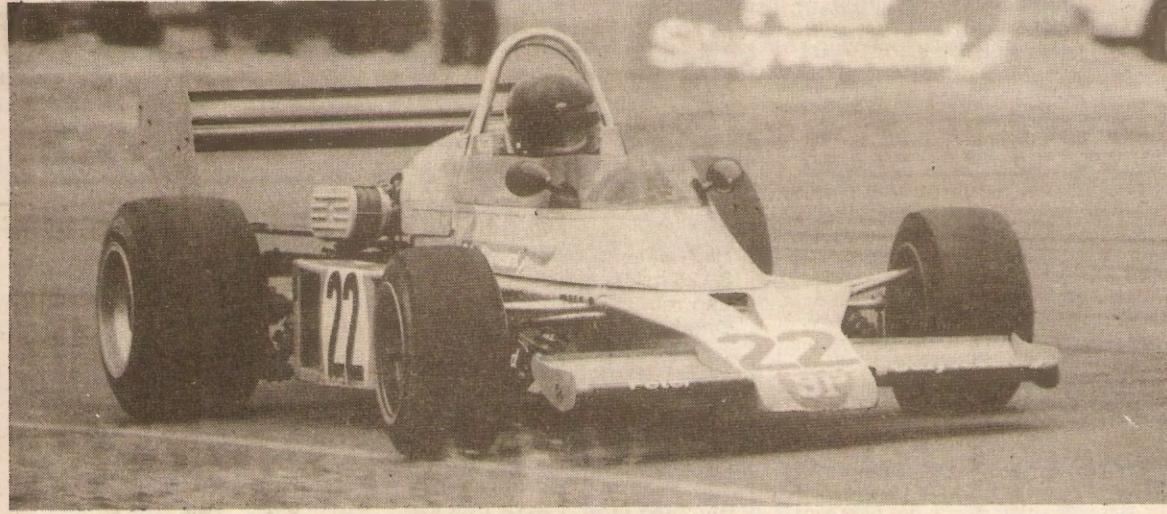
catchpole

DON'T SHOUT LAD,
YOU'LL SCARE 'EM.





Above: Dave McMillan locks a front wheel of his Ralt at Manfeild. Below: Mini McLaren M23? Ross Stone's neat little Cuda won the qualifying race.



MANFEILD continued

something that a number of people would prefer to forget. The trouble was that local boy David Oxton (Chevron B39) was fastest with 65.5s for the 1.88 mile circuit. That was 0.1sec better than Rosberg's 1977 lap record with a Chevron B34. So far so good. The thing that must have made the organisers, and some of the representatives of New Zealand's motor racing news media, cringe a bit was that they had decided that Oxton was really not in the seeded class for this Stuyvesant field, and thus should be one of the participants in a 10-lap preliminary canter which had the main objective of letting a few of the rats and mice join the chosen few—if they showed themselves good enough.

To be fair, Oxton's task was simplified by Rosberg and, unwittingly, McMillan. Rosberg went out in the first session and within a couple of laps McMillan had hooked in behind him, in the hope of making a fast one. Rosberg, wise to the stratagem, decided to shake off the Ralt, and put his right boot in. At Splashe, which is turn 2 at Manfeild and a quickish left-hander in full view of the main spectating area, 'Keke' lost it in quite a big way. McMillan thought he had missed the Chevron, but he nudged its left rear wheel right out of shape as Keke went round for the second time. Exit Rosberg and McMillan from that qualifying session. The track was clean and fast, and Oxton caught everyone else unawares. By the time it was all over, with his 65.5 he was a clear 0.13sec ahead of Rahal, while Riley (65.71), Melville (65.97) and Perkins (65.98) were the only others among the 22 hopefuls to break 66secs. Rosberg was next quickest with a woeful 66.11 and, for the record, McMillan made 66.46.

In the second session, Rosberg

(65.62) was quickest, but the track was as greasy as a coldish pork chop and there was no way for anyone to eclipse Oxton's first session time. After Rosberg were Riley (65.67), Perkins (65.85), Oxton (65.91), Rahal (65.96) and Millen, the best of the rest with 66.08.

Race day was fine and warm, and this brought a warm smile to the face of race promoter Robbie Lester, for Manfeild meetings have been held mostly in indifferent to appalling weather since the circuit opened some 27 or so meetings ago. Proceedings started with the 10-lap parody for unseeded Stuyvesant drivers. This was won quite handsomely by Ross Stone in the smart little Cuda JR3, designed and built by Ross and his brother Jim, while fastest qualifier Oxton came last. Apart from bewildering an uninformed if near-record crowd, this rather tame demonstration could have served little other purpose than to add weight to the inferiority complexes of the two most undistinguished, but nevertheless seeded, drivers to grace this series: the personable trier with the funny (not ha-ha) Ehrlich RP3, Pierre Dieudonné, and Ian Grob (March 77B), who has tended to knock off the nose of his Alan Docking Racing entry more frequently than he has had cause to blow his own.

In any event, when the 20 starters lined up for the first race that counted, Oxton was on pole with Rosberg outside him. Riley was outside Rahal on row 2 and row 3 comprised Perkins and Millen, while Andrew Miedecke (March 76B) and McMillan had the fourth row. For the record, Grob was 13th qualifier on row 7 and Dieudonné the 19th on the last row.

The rolling start went off as well as this method of letting them off will work, Rosberg shading Oxton, who was trailed by Rahal, Riley, Melville, Perkins and Miedecke. At the end of three

laps Rosberg was 2secs clear of Riley, who had taken Oxton, and then Rahal. Behind them came Perkins and McMillan was next.

It was soon obvious that Rosberg was in trouble, the engine of his B39 sounding fluffy and the car visibly slowing. Riley was in front after five laps with Rosberg, Rahal, Oxton, Perkins and McMillan next. Melville had already made a pit visit and was well out of contention. So had Millen and Reg Cook (March 742).

Rosberg drifted back and, at the end of eight laps, he limped into the pits and remained there. Henceforth it was Riley with Rahal next and McMillan challenging the American in the late stages of the 29-lap race. Perkins held McMillan until well into the race, but his pace slackened as his engine began to overheat. Nevertheless, it was Perkins who made fastest lap at 65.21, and that was good enough for pole position in the second race, Oxton still being number two from his qualifying time.

Peter Stuyvesant Series, round 5
Manfeild, New Zealand, Jan 15
29 laps, 54.60 miles

1. Brett Riley (March 77B), 31m 52.72s;
2. Bobby Rahal (Chevron B39), 32m 3.28s;
3. Larry Perkins (Ralt RT1), 32m 4.13s;
4. Danny Sullivan (March 77B), 32m 19.48s;
5. Ken Smith (March 76B), 32m 35.53s;
6. Ross Stone (Cuda JR3), 32m 48.84s; etc.

Fastest lap: Perkins, 1m 5.21s, 103.79mph.

The start of the second race was the most exciting segment of the time it took Rosberg to win it. At the end of the paced lap, Riley, on row 2 with McMillan outside him, apparently rode up over one of the wheels of the Perkins Ralt, which had made a flyer of the start. When Riley touched down again he did so on the nose of Oxton's B39. In the meantime Rosberg was away out on his own, where he was to remain for the rest of the race. McMillan, who had been denied the \$1000 third prize in the first race because he had inexplicably run out of fuel halfway through the last

lap, was in boots and all this time in second place, with Perkins, Rahal, Melville, Sullivan, Dieudonné, Stone and Smith next. Oxton pitted and replaced the nose of his car after one lap. Riley, the front of his March 77B slightly damaged, kept on going, but was the last runner.

In 12 laps, Rosberg was 5secs clear of McMillan, who was being challenged by Rahal. Rahal got by to second place on lap 16, and after McMillan there was Sullivan, who had slipped by Perkins, again worried about an overheating engine. Then came Melville, Millen, Oxton, who had made a good recovery after his first lap stop, Smith, Stone and Dieudonné, who had found the front running pace a bit beyond him and his Ehrlich.

Sullivan moved ahead of McMillan on lap 23 and thereafter the major placings did not change. With Rosberg a clear and convincing winner, Rahal came home second, with Sullivan, who had driven steadily, third, followed by McMillan, Perkins in the ailing Ralt, Melville, Millen, Smith, Stone and Dieudonné.

PETER GREENSLADE

Peter Stuyvesant Series, round 6
Manfeild, New Zealand, Jan 15
29 laps, 54.60 miles

1. Keijo Rosberg (Chevron B39), 31m 57.21s;
2. Bobby Rahal (Chevron B39), 32m 1.84s;
3. Danny Sullivan (March 77B), 32m 4.39s;
4. Dave McMillan (Ralt RT1), 32m 10.6s;
5. Larry Perkins (Ralt RT1), 32m 14.04s;
6. Richard Melville (March 76B), 32m 23.55s; etc.

Fastest lap: Sullivan, 1m 5.59s, 103.19mph.

Rosberg penalised

Last weekend Teretonga played host to the Peter Stuyvesant Formula Pacific brigade. As usual, two races were run, and the first provided controversy.

On pole, predictably, was Keke Rosberg's Operet Chevron, which went round in 56.0s, just a tenth quicker than Larry Perkins in the Ralt. Behind these two came Miedecke's March, Oxton's Chevron, Rahal's Chevron, McMillan's Ralt, Riley's March, Sullivan's March, Millen's Chevron and Melville's March. Ian Grob qualified his March 14th and Pierre Dieudonné was three places further back with the Ehrlich.

During the morning warm-up session, Rosberg blew his engine, which was changed by the mechanics in about an hour. Keke finally made it to the grid with about half a minute to spare, and the field departed on their pace laps. To give his engine a bit of running in, Rosberg made sure he was well clear of the field at the end of the first pace lap. Thereby ensuring that the starter could not drop the flag. At the end of the next one, he was still some way clear, and when the flag went down, the Finn went over the line about 30 yards ahead of the rest. For this he was penalised a minute. Keke had no problem whatever in winning the race, but had only 13s advantage on the road. In the results, therefore, he was nowhere. Perkins inherited the win, followed by Sullivan, Oxton, Miedecke, Rahal and Melville.

Rosberg was anything but pleased about his penalty, and he showed his feelings clearly at the start of the second race. Because of the complicated starting position system, the Operet Chevron was again on row one, alongside Miedecke. This time, on the pace laps, Rosberg drove so slowly that other drivers had difficulty keeping their engines running. After two laps of this, all the cars were stopped and the drivers told to behave like adults. After this, there was no further trouble. Rosberg quickly snatching the lead which he extended to six seconds by the end of

the race, followed home by Perkins, Sullivan, Miedecke, Oxton and Rahal. For most of the race, Brett Riley ran third, but failing brakes allowed Sullivan to close up on him, and as they went into their last lap, the two were running together. Towards the end of the lap, Riley, trying desperately to hold on to his place, went off the road and into the bank. It was a serious accident, the New Zealander having to be cut free from the car, after which he was taken to hospital with a broken leg. However, although his leg must remain in plaster for at least a couple of months, Brett was allowed to leave hospital on Monday.

In the meantime, the points position is a little unclear. Rosberg has appealed against his penalty, and a decision is to be made this week. Keke's argument is that the poleman dictates the speed of the pace laps, and that the field should have kept up with him. In New Zealand it is thought that the decision will probably go against him.

Hunt fastest at Buenos Aires?

We were somewhat astounded by the Buenos Aires results sheet, which credited Gilles Villeneuve's Ferrari with the fastest lap at 1m 49.76s. The young Canadian was never up with the leaders, after all, and it seemed unlikely that he was quicker than Andretti, Watson *et al.* Add to that the facts that he was on the wrong tyres (like Reutemann, he opted for a hard compound) and that he was said to have set his time on lap three (with full tanks and traffic all around him!), and you will understand our scepticism. . . .

It seems likely in our opinion that the

official timekeepers mixed up the two Ferraris and pressed the button on Villeneuve at the start of this incredible lap but on Reutemann (who was ahead of his team-mate) at the end of it. The Argentines are sticking by their decision, but this, we believe, is the *real* list of race times:

Hunt, 1m 50.58s; Reutemann, 1:50.93; Lauda, 1:50.94; Andretti, Depailler, 1:50.95; Tambay, 1:51.09; Watson, 1:51.38; Laffite, 1:51.72; Peterson, 1:52.16; Fittipaldi, 1:52.47; Lunger, 1:52.55; Jarier, 1:52.69; Villeneuve, 1:52.71; Mass, 1:52.75; Jones, 1:52.76; Regazzoni, 1:52.77; Scheckter, 1:52.78; Brambilla, 1:53.23; Leoni, 1:53.24; Ongais, 1:53.47; Pironi, 1:53.69; Merzario, 1:54.81; Stuck, 1:54.92.



Time is getting short if you haven't yet sent in your entry for the Brazilian Grand Prix round of the Moët et Chandon competition. Send your entries in haste to AUTOSPORT Editorial, Haymarket Publishing Ltd, 76 Dean Street, London W1A 1BU.

GP preview

Another Lotus victory at Riotur?

As yet we know little about the new Riotur circuit, the scene this weekend of the Brazilian Grand Prix, round two of the 1978 World Championship. In December, of course, Niki Lauda conducted tyre tests there, and the Ferrari team did the same last week.

All the indications are that the new track is rather 'Mickey Mouse', with an abundance of slow- and medium-speed corners. On the face of it, the Lotus 78s should be ideally suited to it, and Mario Andretti, right after his crushing victory in Argentina, should have his tail up. So, too, provided he takes Andretti's advice about choice of tyres, should Ronnie Peterson in the second car.

It was, of course, a bad decision about tyres which loused up Carlos Reutemann's race in Buenos Aires. Ferrari, however, spent a lot of time trying various Michelin at Rio last week, and are unlikely to make the same mistake again. Gilles Villeneuve will be in the second 312T2.

John Watson and Niki Lauda both ran strongly in Argentina, and the Brabham-Alfa must be contenders for victory. If BA was any guide, John's dreadful luck still refuses to change, and Niki's consistency is unchecked by a change from Ferrari to Alfa.

Looking for a better race this weekend will be James Hunt, who was unable to get his McLaren M26 balanced to his satisfaction in Argentina. James is sure to be right in contention and Patrick Tambay may well not be very far behind him.

The revelation of Buenos Aires was the showing of Patrick Depailler's new

Tyrrell. After the first day of practice the Frenchman was on the verge of despair, but a change of spring rates and suspension settings transformed the car and Patrick finished a strong third. The car's fantastic brakes should be a great advantage through the twists of Rio. Didier Pironi drives the second car.

Clay Regazzoni and Hans Stuck had a disappointing time in BA, and will be hoping for more from their Shadows in Brazil, and the same is true of the two Surtees of Vittorio Brambilla and Rupert Keegan. Danny Ongais and Lamberto Leoni will be out once more in the Ensigns, and Jochen Mass and Jean-Pierre Jarier drive the two ATS cars.

One-car entries come from Ligier, for whom Jacques Laffite nearly scored a fifth in Argentina, Wolf, who had their worst weekend ever a couple of weeks ago when Jody Scheckter was uncompetitive in both practice and race, and Fittipaldi, for whom Emerson will be trying hard in front of a home crowd. Alan Jones gives the attractive new Williams its second race, and Arturo Merzario will do the same with his namesake. The three BA non-qualifiers, Eddie Cheever (Theodore), Hector Rebaque (Lotus 78) and Divina Galica (Hesketh) will be trying again at Riotur.

And, last of all, the race will see the debut of the new Arrows, driven by Riccardo Patrese. After a really remarkable effort, Oliver and his men have met their deadline. We hope it's been worth it.

RIOTUR

3.125 miles, 5.029kms.

Lap record: not yet established.
Organisers: CBA, Rio de Janeiro.

TIMETABLE

Practice

Friday 10.00-11.30
13.00-14.00
Saturday 10.00-11.30
13.00-14.00

Race (63 laps, 196.94 miles)

Sunday 11.30

(NB: All Rio times are approximately three hours behind our time)

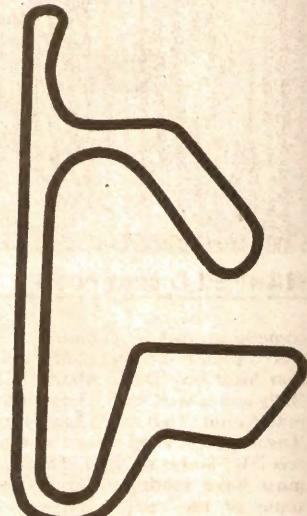
BROADCASTING (approximate times)

Saturday 13.40 Radio 2
17.30 Radio 2
Sunday 17.00 Radio 2
23.02 Radio 2

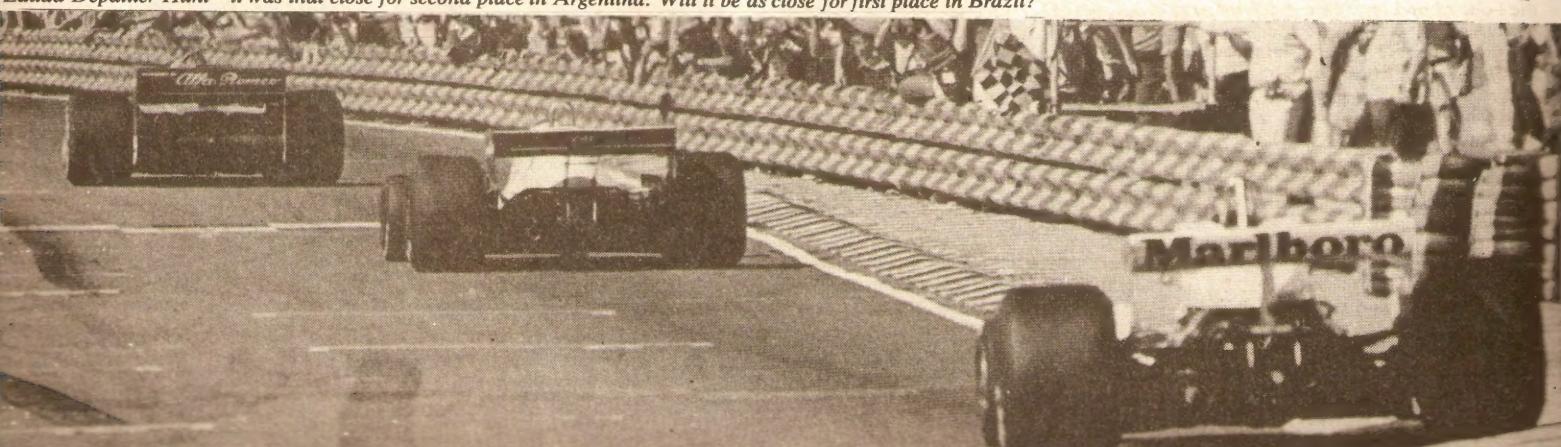
PREVIOUS RESULTS (all at Interlagos)

Year	Driver	Nat Car	Speed
1972*	Carlos Reutemann	RA Brabham-Ford BT34	112.89mph
1973	Emerson Fittipaldi	BR JPS-Ford 72	114.23mph
1974	Emerson Fittipaldi	BR McLaren-Ford M23	112.23mph
1975	Carlos Pace	BR Brabham-Ford BT44B	113.40mph
1976	Niki Lauda	A Ferrari 312T	112.76mph
1977	Carlos Reutemann	RA Ferrari 312T2	112.92mph

*Non-championship



Lauda-Depailler-Hunt—it was that close for second place in Argentina. Will it be as close for first place in Brazil?



After the Polo, the Derby

The Volkswagen Polo has earned the reputation of being one of the most refined small cars. Since its introduction, other manufacturers have been doubling up on their sound insulation, for the car-buying public now know that little cars don't have to be noisy. The Polo isn't just quiet because it's well insulated, however, for noise has been eliminated at source by designing an engine without skew gears and auxiliary driveshafts, not to mention timing chains and valve rockers.

The Polo has a hatchback body of modern conception, but VW found that they were missing some of the gravy because certain people prefer a more traditional saloon, with a separate boot. The Derby is just that, with the transverse front drive and five-bearing engine of the Polo in its 1100cc form, as used in the upmarket LS model. The luggage boot is large—enormous for so small a car—so the Derby is 1ft 2in longer than the Polo but still short enough for easy parking, with a length of 12ft 8in. More remarkable perhaps is the negligible weight increase of just 30lb. The car runs on two-star fuel and a 40mpg consumption is claimed to be possible.

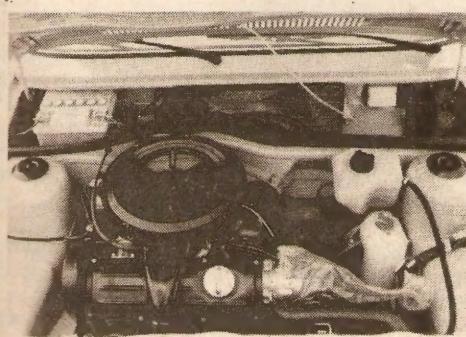
Road impressions

I was able to drive the Derby for 120 miles or so, on roads ranging from winding country lanes to motorways. It has the same light steering and gearchange as the Polo and the roadholding is excellent. The manufacturers claim an 88mph maximum and as I saw a speedometer reading of 92mph, they are probably about right. This is certainly a very willing little car and if it did not perhaps seem quite as quiet as the Polo, the difference was so slight that I could well be wrong.

The suspension is fairly firm and there is very little roll, but on bad roads the ride is comfortable and comparable with that of much larger cars. No brake servo is fitted to cars for the UK market, but if it is offered as an extra I would be inclined to order one. The brakes do not fade, but a strong right leg is necessary when making emergency stops. The heater is efficient but cool-air ventilation is lacking.

At £2850, the Derby is certainly not cheap, but with 5000-mile oil changes, 10,000 miles between services, extremely thorough rust-proofing, and a 12-month unlimited mileage warranty, it would appear to be a good investment—and don't forget that 40mpg of two-star petrol.

Specification and performance data



Car Tested: Volkswagen Derby 2-door saloon, price £2850.
Engine: Transversely-mounted, four-cylinders 69.5x72mm (1093cc). Compression ratio 8 to 1. 50bhp DIN at 5800rpm. Single overhead-camshaft with toothed-belt drive. Solex downdraught carburettor.

Transmission: Single dry plate clutch. 4-speed synchromesh gearbox, ratios: 0.963, 1.347, 2.050, and 3.454 to 1. Helical spur gear final drive, ratio 4.267 to 1. Driveshafts to front hubs.

Chassis: Combined steel body and chassis. MacPherson independent front suspension with anti-roll bar. Rack and pinion steering. Trailing rear torsion-axes on coil springs. Disc/drum brakes. Bolt-on steel wheels, fitted 145SR13 tyres.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 7ft 7.7ins. Track 4ft 3ins/4ft 3.7ins. Overall length 12ft 8ins. Width 5ft 1.4ins. Weight 13.8 cwt.

Performance: Maximum speed 88mph. Acceleration: 0-60mph 9.5s, 0-50mph 15.4s (maker's figures).



Above left: The transverse-mounted 1100cc engine is the Polo LS unit. Above: Three views of the Derby which is the 'traditional' version of the Polo.



The start of racing at Silverstone: the grid for the 1948 Grand Prix. Chiron (Lago-Talbot), de Graffenreid (Maserati) and Etancelin (Lago-Talbot) are on the front row.

A day to remember

Our Special Supplement this week marks 30 years of racing at Silverstone since the 1948 RAC Grand Prix, in which our Technical Editor JOHN BOLSTER finished sixth. We asked him to recall that momentous day.

It is difficult to convey, in a few paragraphs, the motor racing atmosphere just after the war. Every British factory and workshop that was not bombed had been converted for the mass production of aircraft parts and ammunition. Any sort of material was in very short supply and to construct racing cars was virtually impossible. Such simple machines as the little 500cc cars were soon being built, but for the larger categories of racing it was a case of driving something pre-war or going without.

As luck would have it, the formula for Grand Prix racing demanded 1½-litre supercharged cars or 4½-litre unblown models. In various nooks and crannies, often neglected and rusting while a greater competition was taking place, there were quite a few single-seaters of the former size, among which the good old ERA predominated. ERAs were not built as Grand Prix cars, of course, and in pre-war days they ran in what might be called the equivalent of Formula 2 races, in which they went extremely well. It was amusing that, when quite middle-aged, they suddenly became Formula 1 cars and even a rusty one might fetch nearly twice its price when new.

As for the competition, the Germans, who had dominated racing before the war, were naturally out of it. The French were in a pretty poor way after the Occupation, but they produced some fairly effective racing cars of the larger, unsupercharged type, based on sports-racing Delages and Delahayes. They also had the 4½-litre Lago-Talbots, genuine single-seaters which, although not as 'nervous' as an

ERA, could win races because they had no refuelling stops. Remember that we had real races in those days and not these modern short-distance sprints.

The Italians were altogether different. Although they had fought in the war, on both sides at different times, they had never stopped making racing cars, and the Alfa Romeo and Maserati works racers were formidable indeed. The Alfas only attended selected races and were not at Silverstone in 1948, but the Talbots and Maseratis were there in force, including the top works cars in the hands of Ascari and Villoresi; the new Ferraris of Farina and Sommer were entered, but failed to arrive.

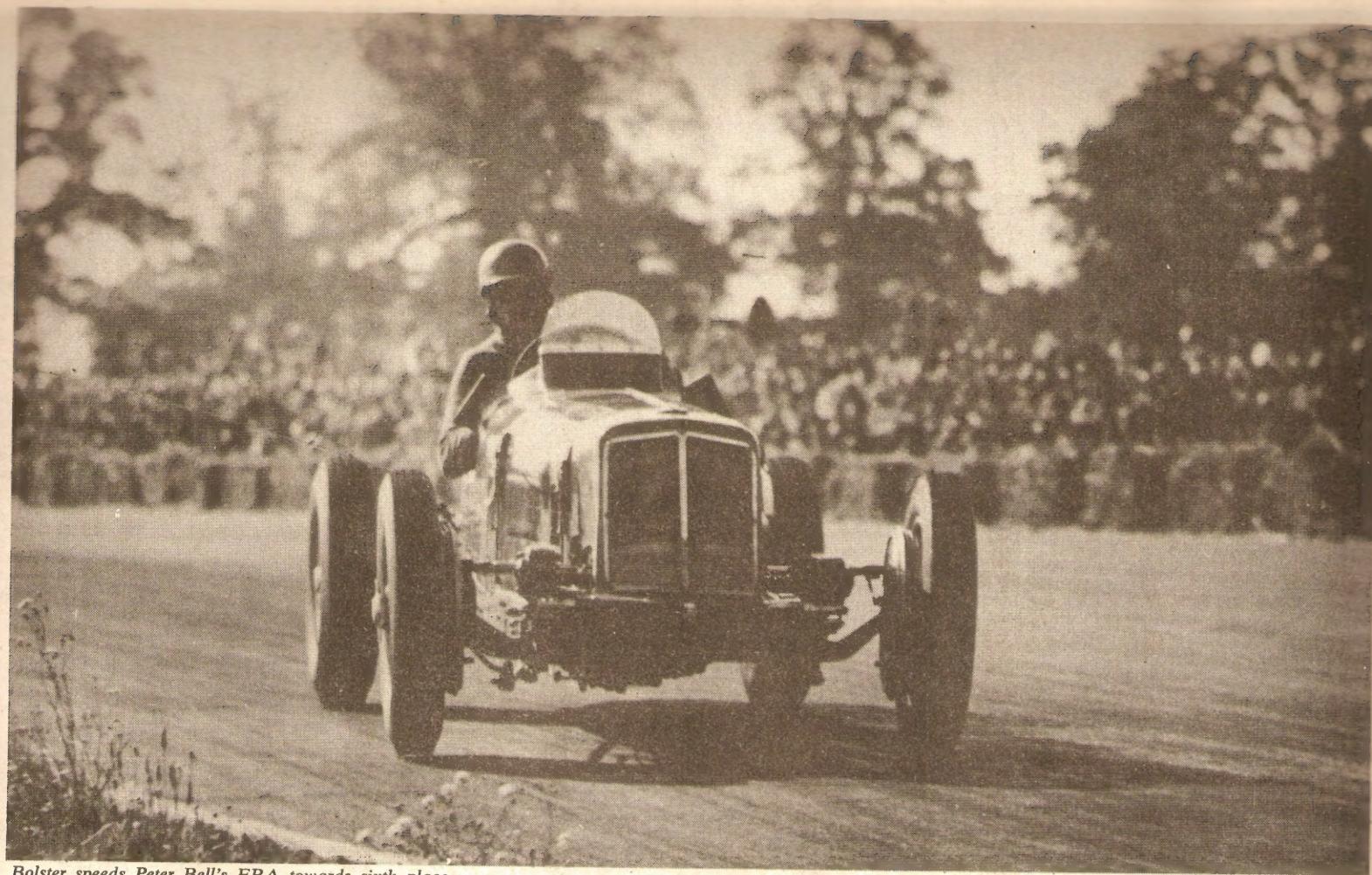
It might be thought that we had a pretty good cheek, patching up our secondhand cars and racing against works teams. The answer was that no British car had won a Grand Prix since Dehane Segrave's Sunbeam pulled it off in 1923; we knew that the most we could do was to be the traditional good losers. Patriotic fervour ran so high that most of us would rather have driven our high, old heaps than those new, red things, for British Racing Green really meant a lot to us then.

There was a marvellous *camaraderie* in those days, when we would lend spare parts to a deadly rival as a matter of course, or even work on his car with him far into the night, if he were in trouble. The ERA was a wonderful car, more reliable than a Maserati if well prepared, but its cast-iron cylinder block was extremely heavy, so the Maser boys always had us on acceleration. Our only strategy was to drive like madmen to keep up the pressure and sometimes—oh wicked joy—those telltale streaks of oil would begin to appear at the louvres of a red

bonnet, and within a few laps it would all be over. Then, there would be one of those Italian grand opera performances in the pits, and the raised thumb of one's mechanic would tell all.

My 'owner', Peter Bell, had acquired the ERA immediately after the war and our problems and disasters would fill a rather obscene book. At last he obtained the services of George Boyle as mechanic, who decided on a complete rebuild. As an engine man he was superb, and we had the famous ERA reliability from then on. At first we had some awful races, because George somehow got the steering and suspension settings mixed up, but by the time the Silverstone event this had all been ironed out. I knew that I had an utterly reliable car that now handled well, and George decided to fit our smaller supercharger, for he considered that the new aerodrome circuit would be a killer. "If you finish, you'll be well up", he forecast.

The Silverstone circuit was not the present one, but a weird concoction including the runways as well as some of the perimeter track. As it still had to be available for flying at short notice, the temporary pits were of tubing, clips, and canvas, and they were situated on the hill from Abbey to Woodcote. Copse was a sharp turn on to the runway and Segrave corner, halfway down, was a left-hand hairpin on to the other runway, after which one turned right on to the perimeter at Maggots, Becketts, Chapel, and Hanger Straight being as now. Stowe was a sharp one on to the runway and Seaman, the other left-hand hairpin, was so close to Segrave that you could see chaps coming the other way, over the straw bales. This was the period of the straw bales, for agriculture geared to



Bolster speeds Peter Bell's ERA towards sixth place.

wartime needs had produced them in vast quantities, but after several lives had been lost, they were banned as dangerous a few years later. Anyway, from Seaman the runway led to Club, and we were back on the perimeter again.

This was a real mickey-mouse circuit, which suffered from the prevailing disease of too many slow corners, but permission to use the airfield was tardy in coming and the race eventually took place in October. With Brooklands and Donington out of action, and motor racing enthusiasm at fever heat, it was obvious that the Grand Prix would attract a record crowd and there was no time to make proper provision for them. I realised that there would be traffic blocks galore, so I borrowed a caravan and lived at the circuit.

During the practice period, the veteran Louis Chiron electrified us by achieving pole position in a Lago-Talbot, and his team-mate 'Phi-Phi' Etancelin was also on the front row, alongside 'Barney' Graffenreid's Maserati. Bob Gerard was there too, with his incredibly fast ERA—somehow he had persuaded it to stay in one piece at 7,000rpm, or even 7,500 when pressed, which was phenomenal with such a long stroke. The front row was completed by Leslie Johnson in the 'works' ERA. This was the dreaded E-type, a modern-looking car, as low as a Maserati, but hopelessly fragile for a long race.

To my fury, I had been placed among the reserves, but I was easily the fastest of these and secured a third-row grid position. The 'works' Maseratis arrived late, practising unofficially, which placed Ascari and Villoresi on the back row. Travelling across war-torn Europe could still be a problem, and I was so glad to be racing at home for once.

On the great day, George warmed up the ERA on the jack, to get the preselective gearbox heated right through. He changed the plugs, putting in a set that we had previously tried for a few laps at racing speed, as the post-war ones were of variable quality and they were very highly stressed in a supercharged engine. He had another set in the pockets of his overalls and stood on the starting line, plug-spanner in hand, until the officials chased him away. He need not have worried for, in spite of carrying 50 gallons of "dope" that was 80 per cent

methanol, the old car made a good getaway and I managed to barge through the second-row boys on Woodcote. To my great surprise, I found myself catching Leslie Johnson and was right on his tail—at Copse I believe it was—when it happened!

Something dreadful, like steering failure, always seemed to befall the 'works' ERA, and this time it was a beauty. A driveshaft let go and punched the bottom out of the tank which was, of course, full of fuel. The tank, as on all

supercharged racing cars, was kept pressurised by a reducing valve from the blower, so the fuel, all of it, was expelled instantly and ignited by sparks from the flailing end of the shaft. It exploded into a huge ball of flame, through which I dashed, but incredibly neither the car nor my moustache caught fire, and I missed the crippled E-type by sheer luck.

A little further on, the same thing nearly happened again! Reg Parnell, in a second-row grid position, had a new 4CLT Maserati and

"I could settle down to drive as hard as I dared."





"Many of the tired cars blew out oil from their breathers, and the circuit became like a skating rink."

A day to remember

continued

was determined to use his advantage over the works drivers from the back row. Unfortunately, he slid wide and ran over a course marker,

A delighted JVB is congratulated at the finish by Wilkie Wilkinson and Marcus Chambers.

which knocked the drain plug out of his tank, causing it to empty on the track in seconds; almost incredibly, there was no fire.

When Ascari and Villoresi overtook me, their acceleration away from the slow corners was tremendous, and although the high, old ERA was unexpectedly quicker than they were through Woodcote, they soon drew ahead. The incredible Bob Gerard, using his 'hurry' rev-limit to the full, chased them hard enough to make Villoresi slide into the straw bales, but the Maserati was sufficiently low-built to escape

the usual overturning act and he continued at speed after a very fraught moment. Bob's refuelling stop was superb, his well-drilled team gaining him valuable seconds, whereas Ascari was the victim of some more Italian grand opera, which let Villoresi into the lead again.

My pit stop went quite well, although I was desperately conscious that dear old Louis Rosier, with whom I had been duelling earlier, must be forging ahead because the blue Lago-Talbot need not be refuelled. When one rejoined after a stop, it seemed rather terrifying as the cars flew past, for many of them were getting short of shock absorbers and brakes, becoming a bit wild in consequence. Now came the best part of the race, for with clean screen and goggles, plus the knowledge that the tyres were going to last, I could settle down to drive as hard as I dared. I was keeping to the 6,500rpm limit, but every lap as I passed the pits I prayed for the faster signal.

Supreme enjoyment and tragedy are never far apart in motor racing. Geoff Ansell's ERA was going well, but my brakes were still in good condition and I managed to take him going into a corner. I think he tried to re-take me and went too wide, touching the straw bales and overturning instantly. He appeared to make a good recovery from his injuries and even drove again, but he subsequently suffered a fatal relapse.

In the closing stages of the race, I was catching Prince Bira's Maserati, which was starting to lose its brakes. If only I could have had permission to use 7,000rpm, I might have got on terms with him, but the signal never came. As the race ran out, many of the tired cars were blowing oil from their breathers and, since catch tanks had not been invented, the circuit became a skating rink.

Of course Villoresi and Ascari prevailed, with Bob Gerard a marvellous third and Louis Rosier fourth. Bira nursed the Maserati home fifth and, although I was only sixth, I was no end chuffed to be the second British driver.

There's a postscript, for when the gallant ERA was taken down, George found a cracked valve. If I had received that much-desired faster signal, it might not have stood the pace, so the owner's decision proved to be right after all.





German Champion Stommelen (Loos Porsche 935) leads Schurti (Moritz 935), Wollek (Kremer 935) and Ertl in the turbo Toyota at the Nürburgring.

GROUP 5 IN GERMANY

A national alternative

FALK VOM HOFE reviews the exciting German Group 5 series and discusses some of the prospects for the future.

For what is essentially a national saloon car racing series, the German Group 5 championship attracts remarkable crowds, who flock to watch the qualifying races because of the very high quality of the fields. Due to the support of manufacturers such as Porsche, Ford and BMW, and the attraction of the big prize funds which are offered by the promoters, the series has been contested by a large number of very well prepared cars and by a good smattering of leading 'name' drivers. In fact, most race fields seen in the German national events last season would have done justice to any World Championship of Makes event.

Many interesting things are happening for the 1978 series, which starts in March at Zolder. For example, reigning champion Rolf Stommelen—for many years a Porsche stalwart—will campaign the unique Schnitzer Toyota Celica turbo, while 1.4-litre turbocharged engines will be plentiful in the popular 2-litre division of the championship, from which the best racing has come.

The 1977 German Group 5 season not only raised high hopes, but for the most part fulfilled them, too. The 'small' division (up to 2 litres) excelled beyond expectation, but the big division did not quite live up to its predicted reputation.

In Division 2, there were too few cars, usually three, which were potential winners. At the very beginning of the season, only two drivers were really in it in the Porsche-dominated over 2-litre division, namely Bob Wollek with the Vaillant water-heater badge on his

Kremer Porsche 935, and Manfred Schurti, who carried the familiar Jägermeister stag head on his similar Moritz car. Had Rolf Stommelen, the eventual winner of the series with one of Georg Loos's Porsches, not joined the band from the second round through to the end, Division 1 would have been rather boring, despite casual appearances of guest drivers such as Jochen Mass, John Fitzpatrick, Peter Gregg and Claude Haldi.

None of these could match the class of the three top drivers. Not even Mass could keep up with them during the second round, at the Nürburgring, although he is completely at home there. The driving ability of Stommelen, Schurti and Wollek was beyond question, but the opposition was scarce. In truth, it would have been better to see their combined talents in the smaller capacity class, where the real racing was going on.

The 2-litre class events were a mixture of surprise parties and catch-as-catch-can performances. The cars were always marvellous to look at, and the racing very spectacular for the public. Everybody attending a Division 2 race got good value for his money. Not even the most expert among the spectators had expected the competition to be that fierce right from the beginning. After the first race, at Zolder, Zakspeed Team Manager Erich Zakowski freely admitted that he had underrated the BMW Junior Team consisting of Manfred Winkelhock, Marc Surer and Eddie Cheever. Zakowski could not provide his man Hans Heyer, twice the German national champion using Ford products, with the right material. And when he finally could, the season was half over; all chances for a Heyer hat-trick were gone.

So, from March at Zolder onwards, it was quite clear that the most exciting racing was

likely to be seen in the smaller class, but that the 1978 German champion would probably be a competitor in the larger class.

The uncompromising BMW Junior Team disregarded the business of championship point-counting. Their fresh and disrespectful driving meant more than pure point hunting as they really made the championship establishment dance. Sometimes they drove their 320is a little bit beyond the strictest terms of legality, but not very far.

Jochen Neerpasch, the Bee-Em competitions boss staged the first surprise at Zolder. With his usual understatement, he said about his new recruits: "They are there to learn". But everybody in the game—and especially in the business—knew that this was only half the truth: they were out there to win, and at least to prevent Ford from winning the German championship title for the sixth time in a row. And that they did by winning themselves a few races in convincing fashion indeed.

Marc Surer, the Swiss Formula 3 driver of 1976, was the first to score when he beat Hans Heyer fair and square in the first round. In practice, Surer had been quicker than Heyer by nearly a second, doing a lap time which Heyer thought he could have matched only with a turbo engine. The two other Juniors, Winkelhock and Cheever, came third and fifth: a convincing start to an exciting season.

The spectators at the second round went home with a similar impression: Surer and Winkelhock were placed third and fourth, but were beaten by 'Ring specialists Hans Stuck (Faltz BMW) and Heyer: no ignominy, that, for the young men. Cheever diced fiercely with Ronnie Peterson in the HAT BMW, a duel which led the Swede to make some harsh, revengeful remarks on the American's driving. Both fell out.

By round three, the Terrible Trio had learned about driving saloon cars at the 'Ring still better, and their driving had become still rougher. The aggression against the rival Ford team steadily rose, but on several occasions the members of the Junior Team crossed the thin line between hard but fair driving, and racing hooliganism. In fact, they even did this among themselves! In the second race at the 'Ring, they sandwiched Hans Heyer and deprived his car of its spoiler and wheel arches. Then Surer sent Winkelhock into the catchfencing!

It was Winkelhock, in fact, who became the revelation of the year. The other two Juniors were already internationally known quantities, whereas Winkelhock was the 1976 winner of the VW Scirocco Cup. It was remarkable that at once he could cope with the performance of the Formula 2 engined BMW 320i. He himself built and maintained his car, being (in good Swabian tradition) a registered master mechanic. He had quit racing altogether before his exams, having begun his career with a little NSU TTS. His careful work and solid driving were supported by Würth, one of the largest German manufacturers of screws. Würth are to continue their sponsorship this year for Winkelhock. The German will race a HAT-built 320i fitted with a Schnitzer 1.4-litre turbocharged engine. This year Winkelhock has a good chance for the championship title. His image was unscratched by 1977 for, in contrast to his team-mates, he was seldom involved in accidents, and if at all as a victim.

The climax to the intense BMW/Ford rivalry came at the Norisring race where Ford's 'Junior' Armin Hahne and BMW Junior Surer had a coming-together. The rather fragile glassfibre bodies were put out of shape, and Surer went into the pits for a quick repair. When leaving them, he waited for Winkelhock and Heyer to come by, these two dicing for second place. Cheever was far ahead, winning the race comfortably.

Surer let Winkelhock through, pulling over. But there was Heyer. BMW and Escort touched each other several times, and went sideways. Everything was recorded on TV; so everybody could judge objectively. The Swiss's BMW lobby said that Surer had not seen Heyer (but admitted privately that the biggest mistake was that Surer had done it before the TV



Top: BMW Junior twins Winkelhock and Surer with their 320is. **Above:** Hahne and Hezemans were among the leading Ford drivers.

GERMAN GROUP 5 CHAMPIONSHIP 1977

1 Rolf Stommelen.....	Porsche 935.....	160
2 Bob Wollek.....	Porsche 935.....	152
3 Manfred Winkelhock.....	BMW 320i.....	108
4 Hans Heyer.....	Ford Escort RS.....	100
5 Eddie Cheever.....	BMW 320i.....	82
6 Manfred Schurti.....	Porsche 935.....	80
7 Hans Stuck.....	BMW 320i.....	60
8 Tim Schenken.....	Porsche 935.....	56
9 Franz Konrad.....	Porsche 935.....	54
0 Harald Grohs.....	BMW 320i.....	50

cameras). The Ford party held that Surer had blocked Heyer on purpose.

In the BMW camp, the consequences were immediate: for the rain-soaked Diepholz race, the Junior Team was replaced by the 'Gentleman Team', with Hans Stuck, Ronnie Peterson and David Hobbs driving. Stuck won his third championship race at Diepholz, whereas Peterson over-rated his own driving ability and the stopping power of his brakes in the wet. He sailed into the green pastures of Lower Saxony, just coming to a halt in front of the spectators.

Ickx in the 'baby' 1.4 Porsche turbo blows off the 2-litre field at Hockenheim. On the left is Krebs in one of the Schnitzer 1.4 BMW 2002 turbos.

There he met a lot of other competitors who had also thrown their cars away, among them guest driver Rupert Keegan in the GS BMW normally driven by Jörg Obermoser, and Armin Hahne as well.

Hahne's progress during the season with his Mampe liqueur sponsored Escort was less spectacular than that of the BMW Juniors. He constantly came in third, fifth or sixth, with inferior material to Heyer.

The champion himself was on par with his main opponents by mid-season. By then, Erich Zakowski and the works at Köln had built up a car which was very near the weight limit. Another advantage, which came with the new lighter car for the first time at Mainz-Finthen airport, was a light alloy engine, which kept its power under heat as well. The car, which Hahne will race again this season—but with a 1.4 turbo engine fitted—has got an integral tubular rollcage to which the suspension is attached. This makes the Ford stiffer and prevents flexing of the body, an all-important factor for a car which has so many glass fibre or Kevlar parts. Heyer scored a win at Mainz and several second places. For this season there is a Capri version for the bigger class in the wind.

The major changes to this year's Escorts will be in the gearbox and transmission region. The engines of last year were supposed to have 285bhp; this year's engines would need to have at least 370bhp if they were to stand the pace of the Schnitzer turbo engines.

Among the privateers, there was one big surprise and one totally disappointing performance. The surprise was the performance of the Schnitzer cars, the only ones with the old BMW 2002 body. The superior power of their turbo engines made up for their rather inferior brakes, high drag rate and poor handling compared with the works 320i. Nevertheless, the colourful Rodenstock (spectacles) sponsored cars made a real impact. At Zolder, Harald Ertl was among the leaders before spinning away his place, and thereafter Albrecht Krebs and Peter Hennige waved the Schnitzer flag to great effect.

Hennige bought himself the seat from race to race, paying an estimated fee of £3800 per race. He won at Kassel-Calden, after Krebs had switched off the electrical circuit by accident when leading. The latter had put in a fantastic time at the Nürburgring by flying around in 7m 58.0s, but in the race the engine let him down.

Later on, Krebs was replaced by guest drivers such as Walter Röhrl and Klaus Ludwig, who won the last race at the 'Ring in front of Heyer. Meanwhile the cars are sold to Austria, from where Sepp Mannhalter will campaign them in both Austrian and German national championship races.

The second string to the Schnitzer bow came

in the form of a turbocharged Toyota Celica in the big division. It was built in three months from scratch, and was driven into fourth place by Harald Ertl at the last championship race, after two poor showings at Hockenheim and Zolder. The car is being developed at the moment by Rolf Stommelen at Paul Ricard, and it is a very exciting prospect that he will drive it this season. Its engine certainly cannot match the 680bhp of the Porsche double-turbocharged flat six, but the Toyota has an advantage on the weight side.

The greatest disappointment was Toine Hezemans's Escort, which never met the expectations of its builders. Its biggest plus was its stopping power, provided by Porsche 917 brakes; but that was that. On the whole, the £150,000 project was a failure. At first, the Swindon engines proved to be down on power, and then Tom Ammerschläger, Ford's suspension specialist, discovered that the back axle was living a life of its own, steering the car where it shouldn't go. Having changed that, Hezemans could match the speed of the private BMW teams, but never (except at Kassel-Calden) matched the speed of the works BMWs or Heyer's Zakspeed car, not to speak of the turbos.

Hezemans has now sold the car to his fellow countryman Hans Kok. Grab and Weisberg, his sponsors, have pulled out of the series. Grab, a big Ford dealer, does not think it worth while to spend another £150,000 on a new turbocharged car, a sum which he thinks is necessary to be competitive as a privateer. "And this is a low price for a project such as ours last year," Grab says. "We had some ideally minded people in the team, whom we paid only their expenses. The works have to pay a lot more for their regular employees."

Another disappointment was Manfred Schurti's Porsche 935, which very rarely saw the flag. At Zolder it was the winner of the big class, but afterwards the Max Moritz car was an also-ran, despite a pole position time at the last race. One can only hope that he will be luckier this season with one of the ten works-built double-turbocharged 935s, similar to the Martini car raced by the works last year.

The Porsche works will only compete in the national series (with the 'baby' 1.4) if the championship develops in a way which is unfavourable for the Marque. The semi-works interests will again be upheld by Georg Loos, with probably a three-car team. If the Loos drivers don't score enough points, then Manfred Jankte will enter the 1.4 car for Ickx to prevent the Ford drivers from scoring maximum points.

But maybe Porsche might even have to appear in the big class with a works car for Wollek, Schurti, Fitzpatrick or Hezemans, in order to stand against the 2.1-litre Toyota? ■



Ingenuity

I read your editorial of January 12 headed *The Privateers*, but cannot agree with your comments regarding the number of entries for World Championship Grands Prix.

Our Bulletin 122 (November 1977) says on page 22: "At least four competitors admitted for official practice will be chosen by the organizer according to the selection formula of his choice". The phrase "at least" implies that there is no superior limit at four. Besides, the selection formula is left at the choice of the organizer.

This precisely allows scope for "ingenuity of the kind adopted last year by the RAC and Silverstone. . . ."

PARIS

YVON LEON,
Secretary, CSI.

Cost-cutting

I am surprised that to date there has not been a great outcry regarding the disgraceful increase in the cost of an RAC Competition Licence. Virtually to double the cost of an International Rally Licence must, in these days of the 10 per cent norm, verge on being criminal.

I am aware of the predicament of the Motor Sport Division, but surely a more simple way of cutting costs would be to transfer the division to less costly offices out of London. After all, very few of the main teams in either racing or rallying are based in London, and they seem to function without undue difficulty. I would have thought that the savings made would outweigh any difficulties.

Although the sum of £20 may appear small in comparison with the cost of competing on an International, cost-cutting must start somewhere and, as the leaders of the nation's motor sport fraternity, I would earnestly ask the RAC to think again.

CASTLE DOUGLAS GEORGE RUTHERFORD

Don't forget Zink

I have read with interest in your November 24 issue of *AUTOSPORT* the article entitled *Formula Ford USA*. I believe some elaboration on the article is needed as the author, Henry Kim Jr, did not fully develop the extent that the Zink Formula Ford participates in United States Formula Ford racing.

I should mention that I race a Zink Formula Ford, model Z10. The Zink Z10 was originally

put into production in 1973, and the basic car remains to this day. One of the aspects of owning a Zink is that the company which builds the car, Citation Engineering of Zionsville, Indiana, continues yearly to update and modify the car to keep it as competitive as newer cars from other manufacturers. The basic frame, body and suspension have remained the same since 1973, with the main improvements over the years being made to springs, sway bars and so on. These changes are easily adaptable to all Zink Z10s.

The car is tremendously strong. I can attest to having put my car into a guardrail nearly head-on at 110mph last year. Amazingly I walked away from the crash without a scratch, the chassis and the car having taken nearly all the impact. My car is now being rebuilt for this season with a new frame and other damaged pieces of course being replaced.

A Zink Z10 driven by David Weitzenhof won the United States Road Racing Championship in the Formula Ford class during the National Championship held this past October at Road Atlanta near Atlanta, Georgia. David defeated the factory Gurney Eagle driven by David Loring, and the factory ADF MK2 driven by its designer, David Bruns. He was also the winner of the American Formula Ford Association Pro Race series for this past year. In fact, Zinks finished first and second in the Pro series here in the USA.

I might mention that Pro Ford racing is getting more and more popular here in the States. I ran a Pro Ford race at Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin in September 1977, and the total purse was \$15,000. The winner of one of the heats and the main event won over \$3000. I finished 23rd in a field of 60 cars, and even I won \$100.

LINCOLNWOOD, ILL, USA ALAN G. LEWIS

Brush Fusegear thanks

Brush Fusegear are sponsoring a 'new look' Special Saloon car championship at Silverstone in 1978, and it would seem appropriate, therefore, for me to write a few words of appreciation to all those who were concerned with our previous involvement with Formula Ford racing over the past three years.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all Formula Ford drivers and their teams for the tremendous support and encouragement that they have given to Brush Fusegear and to me personally throughout our association. Without your enthusiasm, the championship could not have achieved the success it undoubtedly did.

Secondly, in the knowledge that the popular-

Reader Alan G. Lewis of Lincolnwood, USA, drives this neat Zink Z10.



ity of Formula Ford racing is assured with spectators and drivers alike, I would like to wish all of you every success in the coming season.

NORTHAMPTON

CARL HAMER,
Brush Fusegear

Hot for Herman

I am writing also to support Jochen Mass (Diane Knight, *Correspondence*, January 19). After seeing him on BBC's *Superstars*, I must say what a good sportsman he was in most other fields put before him.

My husband, a very keen motor racing fan, was most impressed with me when I started to take a keen interest in his hobby. He is only too glad to report to me on matters in this sport and, knowing I would like to learn more of Jochen Mass, reports to me on all his latest movements. He certainly agrees that Jochen deserves more of a mention (although my husband is very loyal to James Hunt also).

I do not like to mention to my husband that my attraction to Jochen Mass is also a physical one, especially as on a Thursday I have his permission to read his *AUTOSPORT* after him!

BARNEHURST, KENT SHEILA HOUGHTON

I have her full address, Mass. . . . —Ed.

Sick joke?

BBC Television started the Formula 1 season with their usual skill. On Sunday, January 15, we were about to witness Brian Henton at 4.10pm as scheduled—instead, Humpty-Dumpty twice. Is that the idea of a BBC sick joke?

And the day before we were able to witness a three-year-old boy picking football names out of a glass bowl, *LIVE* from Argentina. It was a pity that no one had told the BBC that, 24 hours later, there were going to be a few racing cars nearby.

I reckon they knew all the time. . . .
LONDON NW8 MARK HAYTER

Then as now?

The lead story in *AUTOSPORT* twenty-five years ago this week (issue dated January 23, 1953) concerned Connaught Engineering's plans for the construction of a prototype automobile for the 1954 F1 series. The engine, gearbox, rear axle and many other components were to be of Connaught manufacture although other details were undisclosed. Connaught had just tried their F2 model at Goodwood with Ken Wharton, Graham Whitehead, Roy Salvadori, Stuart Lewis-Evans, Rodney Nuckey and Ken Smith taking the wheel. Tony Rolt was the probable pilot for Rob Walker's car while Johnny Claes of Belgium had ordered an F2 chassis. *AUTOSPORT* also published two views of the very latest GP Ferrari with Mike Hawthorn in the seat—Ascarì having won the previous weekend's Argentine GP with a similar car. The eccentric Spike Rhiando had been sighted in In Guezzam ten days before the magazine appeared on the stands and was thoroughly enjoying his Trans-Sahara crossing attempt on his 'plastic-bubble scooter' and had only suffered overheating due to the continued breakage of cooling fins. On his return Rhiando was said to be continuing in F3 with Les Leston's Special. John Bolster's Technical and Otherwise feature concentrated on the ins and outs of the SU fuel injection system while we also featured our annual Sports Car Survey.

Gordon Murray

continued

1971 and co-operated with Ray Jessop on the BT34 lobster claw car for that same season. It was a hectic time: "MRD didn't separate production and Formula 1 design and we all pitched in on virtually everything. I did the revision to inboard brakes on the BT35s and 36s and then Ron came in one day and gave me an Indy car to design. It was all laid out and ready to be built when the deal fell through. It was never made. . . ."

Interestingly, that car was arranged Eagle-style with the radiators just behind the front wheels, before Eagle did it. A more publicity-conscious man might figure that predating such a successful concept was worth a mention, but that's not Murray's way.

When Tauranac sold MRD to Ecclestone, and then decided he couldn't work with him, Bernie brought back Ralph Bellamy from McLaren and he took over Formula 1 responsibility for the new team. He and Gordon produced the 1972 BT37 around existing BT34 bag tanks without the lobster claw radiator layout.

Meanwhile Murray's moonlight hours were spent sketching a Mini-based tube frame road car and building four of them. It was called the MinBug and Gordon sold his only last year after 30,000 miles. Then Alain de Cadenet popped up, wanting a Le Mans car for private entry with Duckham's Oil support. Apart from the IGM, the MinBug and that stillborn Indy project, this was Gordon's first scratch design and, apart from using Brabham uprights, it was all new. "Considering what a shoestring deal that was, we were really lucky the way it ran."

That autumn saw Bellamy leave for Lotus and Bernie giving Gordon a free hand to design an all-new Formula 1 car. Nothing current was to be used if it might limit the project's potential. He could spend what was necessary to build a competitive car. His thinking went like this:

"I figured we'd have to make a small hole in the air to gain on top speed and then there was the shape to think of. Cornering is one basic. In high-speed corners aerodynamics have a vital effect on cornering power, and in low-speed corners it's things like C of G which count. So I went for the triangular chassis section which keeps the fuel load low—the C of G of the car and of the fuel coincide (precisely)—and all the air that reaches the chassis is kept on top of it, and not underneath. The shape is easy to produce in simple panels, a triangle is very rigid and strong in itself and everything just fits in well with this shape; the sides of the tub even have the same slope as the cam covers of the DFV engine. . . ."

He wanted ". . . A short wheelbase and a simple fuel system with just three tanks, one each side of the tub and one behind the seat. Then there was the radiator question. On the BT34 Ron had taken a normal front radiator—which obviously has to be hung far forward to get the hot air away out the sides and the top, divided it, and moved it back a little. If you look at the BT42/44/45, our radiators are over a foot behind that position, up against the front wheels.

"People compare front radiators with mid-radiators and say 'we've got to keep the weight in the middle of the car, low polar moments' and all that kind of thing. I think the percentage difference made by taking radiators from just



Lauda steps into the Brabham for his first race with the car, in Argentina.

is minimal. You haven't got good airflow back there in any case so the radiators immediately have to go up 50-60 per cent in area. If you go for a narrow-tracked car you're obviously going to go for a wide nose and then there's no disadvantage in keeping the radiators in the nose apart from their weight. So, if you can keep them within 6ins or so of the front of the chassis weight is little disadvantage because they'll be 50 per cent smaller than mid radiators and you can make them any shape you like. . . .

On the BT45C a subtly reprofiled cockpit surround has been adopted to improve airflow around an end-plate supported rear wing. This fashionable appendage offers advantages with its unobstructed working under-surface, and improved yaw resistance from its fin-like vertical supports. The familiar twin radiator pods for which Gordon has made out the case above have been replaced by a full-width one-piece radiator not much more than 4ins deep, housed with a hidden airfoil ramp within a neat letterbox nose section. The BT45Bs has been in overheating front tyre trouble of late, and the C-system was adopted largely to overcome it by allowing a clearer cool-air flow on to them. Before Argentina, Gordon was not really keen to make this public—"But there was a leak".

That was not the only one for the Brabham team in Buenos Aires, as Watson's car overheated, blew off a hose and finally blew its engine very comprehensively. In these cases it is difficult to trace the original leak from what blued wreckage remains.

Lauda's car operated satisfactorily in the race, but Gordon says damage to the front wing and the car carried a greater downforce

right; just not quite quick enough for the Lotus, which is what I predicted before we went down there. It took quite a long time to set the cars up around the new nose and so on because we didn't have any figures to work on—but second again wasn't too bad a start. . . . I was quite happy with the way it operated".

MRD campaigned their neat and essentially simple BT42s through 1973 and for 1974 "Bernard and myself sat down and decided what the shortcomings and good points were and tried to correct the first while retaining the second. We decided to make the BT44 as a second generation BT42 which actually meant a new chassis even though it looked similar. Even though the 42 had a 10 per cent smaller frontal area than some other cars it lacked straightline speed, and we made the 44 nose less drag-inducive. smoothed the cockpit area and cleaned airflow on to the rear wing." Some suspension geometry and stiffness shortcomings were corrected and during 1974 Carlos Reutemann's BT44 won the South African, Austrian and US Grands Prix but a string of retirements tethered him to sixth place in the Championship. Carlos Pace joined the team in mid-season and gave them a second place in the US GP (on his birthday) to support Reutemann's excellent victory.

All this time the team had been financed largely from Ecclestone's personal pocket, à la Hesketh but without the song and dance. For 1975 Martini appeared and Gordon developed the successful BT44 theme into the BT44B, using the same monocoques modified internally. Front suspension geometry was revised though still rising-rate, bodywork was rede-



Lauda keeps James Hunt's McLaren at bay as he heads for second place at Buenos Aires.

nose section. Reutemann finished in the points in eight of the year's 14 Grands Prix, won at Nürburgring and was third in the Championship. Pace won on home ground in Brazil and was sixth in the Championship. The marque placed second behind Ferrari in the Constructors' table, pipping McLaren by one point.

But the good times were about to end. Even Cosworth half-believed their heyday was over as Ferrari won race after race. Martini had fostered a tie with Alfa Romeo after first contact between Ecclestone's MRD outfit and Autodelta had been made back in June 1974. Late that year Bernie had agreed to take on the Formula 1 version of Alfa's flat-12 sports car engine and BT44B development took a back seat as Gordon set about designing an Alfa-engined car for 1976.

The engine switch

It wasn't easy: "When the new wing and airbox regs were going to take effect for '76 there was still a lot of scope left in the 44-series to develop a BT44C or third generation version. It was basically that design's third season as it was, and it could easily have gone into a fourth competitively, I reckon. But we'd already spent the whole of '75 designing and building the BT45 prototype for the Alfa engine. That year we nearly won the Championship anyway with the 44B and I think if we'd put all the Alfa project effort into that car we might have done really well. . . .

"Anyway we really had our work cut out with the BT45. It's not until you start work with a new lump that you realise just how different a flat-12 really is. If you start to lay out a DFV car

you could sketch the engine mounts and you know what oil system and cooling system you should have and where the suspension hangs on and what fuel system you should use—once you're that familiar with an engine you can lay down a new car virtually with your eyes closed.

"The thing you don't realise is how easy it comes until you start to design a car around an entirely different engine, and then it really hits you, especially since the Alfa engine wasn't really intended for Formula 1 but was actually a sports car unit with untidy ancillaries and pumps and bits stuck all over it.

"It was a mighty job to wrap a Formula 1 chassis around that flat-12 which would be capable of supplying all the fuel it required. Apart from being so much heavier on its own, the engine required more fuel and more cooling surface and more oil . . . then there was the sheer physical size of the engine and exhaust system—it's 11 inches longer than a DFV and about 3 inches wider! Fitting that into an engine bay is fairly easy, but when it comes to the overall dimensions of the car, like its wheelbase, and placing components to achieve a favourable weight distribution, having an engine 11ins longer than your usual V8 certainly cuts down the options. . . .

"At that time the engine was 40kg heavier than a DFV but the only things which have remained unchanged from those days are literally just the heads and the block. All the internals are different, the whole layout has been tidied up and there are lightweight parts like titanium rods and titanium exhausts so now it's about 25kg heavier than a DFV. We've got about 510bhp against Cosworth's 500bhp.

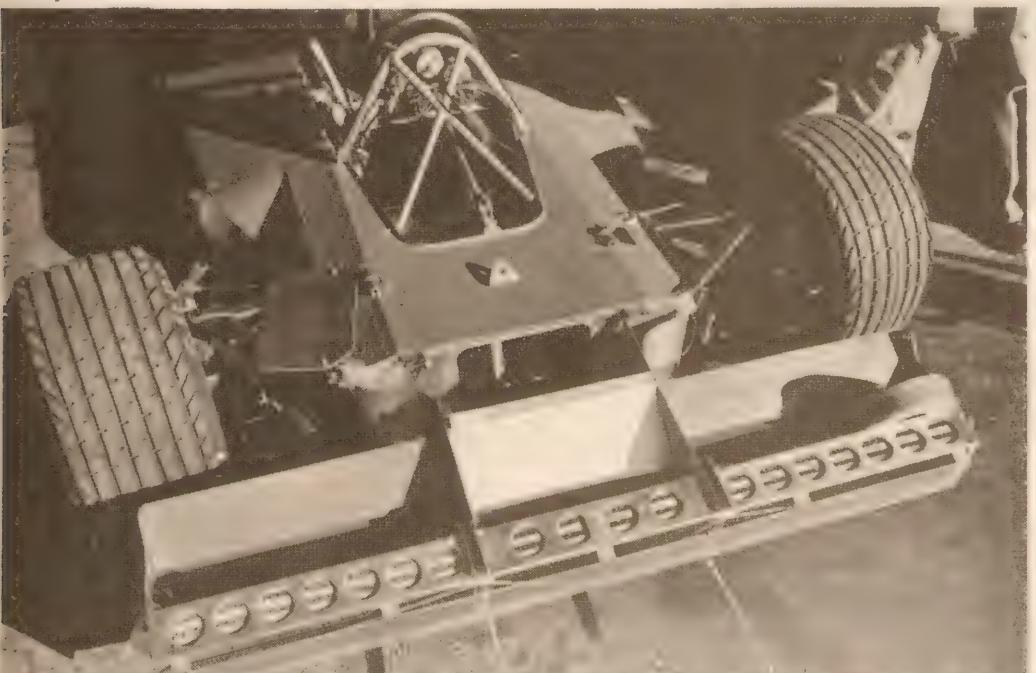
But, you get a good idea how much that 15hp is worth on circuit when you consider the car has to carry around eight gallons more fuel in start-line condition, has extra fuel bag weight and radiator weight and the engine weight, and everything else—and suddenly your 15 horsepower doesn't look so good any more. . . ."

Initially communications with Autodelta were not as good as they should have been, but Murray is extremely happy with the set-up today. All engines are prepared and set-up in Milan and delivered to the team at Chessington ready-to-run. Gordon has a good working relationship with *Ingeniere* Carlo Chiti (" . . . excellent, super chap, speaks very good English—darned sight better than my Italian, anyway") and the Chessington shop now has a direct telecopier link with Autodelta by which working drawings can be exchanged by telephone line in only four minutes per print. Large-size drawings are divided into sections for transmission, then reassembled at the other end. If nothing else, MRD are not under-equipped. For starters, their smart HQ is instantly identifiable with its car park packed by Alfasuds and GTVs!

Still, 1976 was a massive morale crippler for MRD before the engine achieved competitive form and the relationship with Alfa Romeo became properly established and firm. The marque tumbled to ninth in the Constructors' table, behind Shadow and March, and it was purely Pace who gave them hope for the future. Reutemann's heart was elsewhere; he made no secret of his regret for losing Cosworth power and he wasn't about to give his all for a project



Above: Murray (centre) with his boss, Bernie Ecclestone, and team driver John Watson. Below: Front and rear of Murray's BT45C.



in which he had no faith, particularly with his sights now set on Ferrari.

During 1977 John Watson and Hans Stuck displayed their faith in no uncertain manner. "John's a super guy—we're very happy he decided to stay with us. He came on hot the first time he sat in the car and did a brilliant job of picking us all up when Carlos died. He took everything on his shoulders and gave all he could to make it happen. I think that was a brilliant display for which he's never been given enough credit"—Gordon Murray is not given to overstatement, so note the superlatives.

And Stuck: "He became part of the team pretty quickly. Had the occasional race where he couldn't get it together for one reason or another but by the end of the season he was really competitive. He's got Schechter sort of ability, his sheer animal car control is excellent. One problem having him teamed with John though, was the difference in their cars—pedals, seat, wheel, gear-change, even the dash hoop had to be different. It made the T-car job pretty impossible because Hans was so much taller than John and quite a bit heftier too."

Interestingly, Gordon still rates Reutemann very highly as a driver: "He was always far more changeable than Pace. Had distinct dips and peaks when his mood changed, but I'm still convinced that for sheer outright natural driving ability, Carlos is probably the best guy around. His sensitivity to outside influences and his inconsistency are a tragedy."

In 1978 you can sense MRD's optimism for working with Niki Lauda. After his first 20 laps' engine testing at Vallelunga in a BT45B he was totally attuned to the car and at one with it. After that brief initial contact Gordon was enthusing: "... We already know for sure that Niki's just one super-intelligent racing driver. He's fitted into the team right away, which is great. I know the Ferrari was super-reliable last season but it speaks for itself that he became World Champion despite missing the last two races, in what was definitely not the most competitive car. I reckon for sure the Lotus and McLaren were probably 20-25 per cent more competitive, and still he's champion."

The arrow-head BT46 with its surface cooling for '78 has been the object of some controversy since its specification was published. Gordon insists it is sophisticated simplicity rather than "... trick-stuff for trick-stuff's sake". The visible area of its surface cooling had other designers rummaging through old calculations thinking they had got the area required to cool an F1 engine all wrong. After checking and cross-checking they sat back, confident that the BT46's cooling couldn't work, and wondered what Murray was playing at. In fact the BT46 heat exchangers are very deeply corrugated, and their apparent (visible) surface is only some 10-12 per cent of the total cooling area in contact with the airstream.

As the BT46 continues its development, Gordon has modified the BT45Bs to 45C specification, including a reprofiled nose, subtly smoothed cockpit section and fashionable end-plate supported Ralt- or Wolf-type rear wings, with an unobstructed working undersurface.

Lauda flew out from his *Maus Haus* outside Salzburg to test the 45C for the first time at Rio de Janeiro pre-Christmas, and although the new circuit is decidedly flat and Miguel Mouse, Brabham's interim car performed very promisingly.

Still Murray ponders that Ferrari record of '77: "The reliability of Niki's car was incredible, and that's what we're working for—we want to get back to our '75 situation when we finished every race, and in the points. Then . . ." he adds in a tone which anybody else would accompany with a rubbing of hands, "then, we're in with a chance." Lauda's six points in Argentina went a long way towards making him

Renault's run in the snow

Munari retires—R5 Alpines love Monte snow—Pirelli and Michelin debut new tyres

A sight that must have gladdened the hearts of all French rally fans must have been that of the two works Renault 5 Alpines, driven by Guy Frequelin and Jean Ragnotti, leading the Monte Carlo Rally after the first competitive section on Monday.

These attractive little cars impressed rally spectators during 1977 with their exploits on the San Remo and RAC Rallies, and hopefully they have sorted out their earlier transmission problems and will continue their outstanding run on the Monte, the opening round of the 1978 World Championship.

One thing very much in their favour was the heavy snow that was lying on some stages of the first part. Of these stages, only the fifth was completely clear, and this was covered in icy patches.

Although there seem to be no new revelations from the manufacturers, the tyre scene is very much a new one. Both Pirelli and Michelin have new tyres. Michelin have the GF7 for hard snow and the NS9 for soft snow, while Pirelli have no fewer than five types with them. The really new thing from Pirelli is that they have three different tyres with mixed compounds. However, all has not been well for Pirelli, for on the third stage, which was 30 per cent tarmac and 70 per cent snow, the studs wore out before the Fias reached the snow, and so the Italian cars had some very disappointing times.

One sad early retirement was that of the 1977 Monte winner, Sandro Munari in his Lancia Stratos. He lost road time early on with accelerator problems, and finally went out between the fourth and fifth stages with engine failure.

The Monday loop—the *Parcours de Classement*—started at 6am in Gap and finished at 3pm in Monte Carlo. The second loop—*Parcours Commun*—was starting in Monte Carlo early on Tuesday morning and lasted a total of 36 hours.

Despite Fiat's tyre problems, Walter Rohrl was equal second in his 131 Abarth on Monday. Fulvio Bacchelli was also doing well, lying fourth in his first drive in the Lancia Stratos. The rally leaders after each of the first stages were: Stage 1 Bacchelli; Stage 2 Rohrl; Stages 3 and 4 Bacchelli; Stage 5 Frequelin. The rally finishes in Monte Carlo tomorrow.

The stage times on Monday were:

SS1: 1, Bacchelli 7.33; 2, Munari 7.36; 3, Rohrl 7.43; 4, Jean-Claude Andruet 7.47; 5, Maurizio Verini 7.51; 6, Bernard Darniche 7.55.

SS2: 1, Rohrl 14.00; 2, Verini 14.11; 3, Munari and Bacchelli 14.14; 4, Darniche 14.20; 6, Jean-Pierre Nicolas 14.22.

SS3: 1, Frequelin and Ragnotti 33.20; 3, Nicolas 33.45; 4, Michele Mouton 34.08; 5, Bacchelli 34.09;

6, Lars Carlsson 34.19.

SS4: 1, 'Segolen' 10.30; 2, Bacchelli 10.50; 3, André Peirone 10.57; 4, Frequelin and Ragnotti 10.58.

SS5: 1, Rohrl 15.53; 2, Ragnotti 15.57; 3, Nicolas 6.00; 4, Frequelin 16.10; 5, Verini and Bernard Beguin 16.11.

The top ten on Monday were:

1, Guy Frequelin/Jacques Delaval (Renault 5 Alpine), 1h 23m 19s; 2, Jean Ragnotti/Jean-André Andre (Renault 5 Alpine) and Walter Rohrl/Christian Gessdorfer (Fiat 131 Abarth), 1:23.22; 4, Fulvio Bacchelli/Arnaldo Bernacchini (Lancia Stratos), 23.33; 5, Jean-Pierre Nicolas/Vincent Laverne (Porsche Carrera), 1:23.38; 6, Maurizio Verini/Francesco Rossetti (Fiat 131 Abarth), 1:24.04; 7, Bernard Darniche/Alain Mahe (Fiat 131 Abarth), 1:25.00; 8, Michele Mouton/Francoise Conconi (Lancia Stratos), 1:25.27; 9, Jean-Claude Andruet/Béatrice Fiat 131 Abarth), 1:25.36; 10, Salvador Servia/Alex Brusenga (Fiat 131 Abarth), 1:26.11.

Class leaders: Group 1 Anders Kullang (Opel Kadett GT/E) 11th overall; Group 2 Frequelin/Group 2 Segolen/Porsche Carrera; Group 4 Rohrl/Dess



The little Renault 5 Alpine is very much at home in the ice and snow that covered the early stages on the Monte.



Guy Frequelin.



Jean Ragnotti.

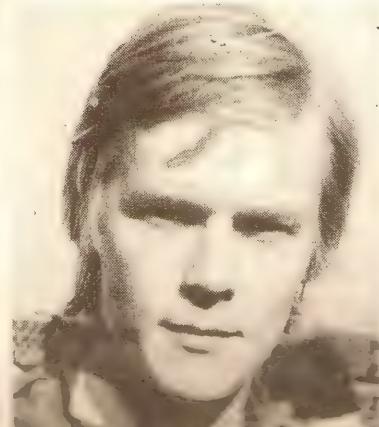


Walter Rohrl.

Ari's good start

Ari Vatanen (right) has definitely started 1978 off in good form by winning last weekend's Mannta Rally in Finland, the second round of the national championship, in a Marlboro sponsored RS1800.

The rally was run over ten special stages, many of them the same as used on the 1000 Lakes, which were covered in ice and snow. Although second and fourth overall were Timo Salonen and Markku Alen in their Fiat 131 Abarths, it was a good rally for Ford as they also won the Group 1 and 2 classes. Group 1 was won by Kyosti Hämäläinen in his RS2000 (third overall) and Group 2 was won by Hannu Valtaharju in his RS1800 (fifth overall). The next round of the championship is on the Arctic Rally (February 3-5).



Argentine regs

Following the success of the Singapore Airlines London to Sydney Rally, it now seems that the Turn Around South America, Argentine International Rally '78, another marathon event, is definitely on.

Regulations have been published by the organisers (the Argentine Automobile Club) for an event which will start in Buenos Aires on August 17 and finish there on September 24. With a prize fund of 228,000 dollars it is not surprising that manufacturers such as Mercedes are interested.

The regulations and route details make up quite a heavy volume and anyone interested should contact the Vuelta a la America del Sud. Automovil Club Argentino, Avenida del Libertador 1850, Piso 5, Buenos Aires, Argentina, telex 121896-ACABA.

Dawson's Datsun deal

An interesting entry in the newly instigated Group 5 class on the Mintex Rally is for Andy Dawson in a Datsun Violet. Andy will be bringing this car out for the first time since the 1977 Galway Rally. "I am about to take the Galway stickers off it," was his remark last Monday.

It also seems that Andy is off to Japan before the Mintex and, if all the strong rumours about his plans are correct, it seems he will be running two of the new lighter 160J Violets in the Sedan Products Open series.

Obviously Andy has quite extensive

Dawson—busy year.



This photograph of a new development model was on a Datsun Christmas card. Could this possibly be their rally car of the future?



Mercedes Easter date?

With Easter approaching and with it the Safari, rumours are rife about the involvement of Mercedes in the event. Although three entries for 280Es have been made, the official word from Mercedes is that they have not decided and no decision is expected for at least another week.

The three entries, with drivers to be named, were, in fact, made by the local Mercedes dealer in Kenya, who was trying to help after hearing the strong rumours of a team entering. The dealer also handles Datsun on the event and by putting in the entries early was able to save Mercedes about £150 in fees—a drop in the ocean compared to what the event would cost them!

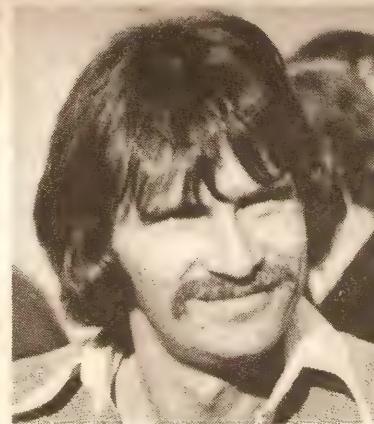
Mercedes, apart from confirming that they are definitely considering the event, also added that it would be a four-car team. With two of these cars likely to come from England, it would not be beyond the bounds of possibility

plans for 1978 as he is at the moment advertising for rally mechanics to work in his newly acquired Watford premises.

If Andy is driving one of these cars in the series, then who will be in the other? It seems that Harry Kallstrom is expected to be doing the Welsh and Scottish, and he would be the obvious choice for the other car.

As well as a full international series in this country, it seems that Datsun also want to get into Europe, and so it is likely that Andy will be doing some of the more prestigious ECR rounds.

Kallstrom—destined for Open Series?



Pond—only scheduled for Open Series.



Kaby—two Group 1 Dolomite Sprints.

Leyland announce limited programme

At last Leyland have announced their rally plans for next year and to put it in a nutshell, they will be contesting the Sedan Products Open series with one 16 valve Triumph TR7 for Tony Pond and Fred Gallagher.

This comes as no surprise to anyone, but the question still being asked is what about the V8? No mention of this project was made in the announcement of the plans and it seems inconceivable that they have nothing planned for this engine.

Although there is nothing very new in Leyland's own particular plans, they are helping Terry Kaby who has been supplied with two Group 1 Dolomite

Sprints for the international series. It really is nice to see all the hard work put in by Terry last year rewarded with help from a manufacturer. Terry has now left his job with Broadspeed and is self-employed building up his two cars—one for tarmac and one for forest use.

He is being partnered again by Brian Rainbow and will be sponsored by Dunham and Haines of Luton and Castrol.

On top of his Group 1 plans, Terry is also going to contest the Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship in a Group 5 car, but negotiations for this are still underway and no details are expected for a week or two.

Boucles entries

With the entries for the Boucles de Spa (February 3-5) having now finally closed, still the most interest for this country will be based round the debut of Chris Slater and Martin Holmes in their European Vauxhall Chevette.

Altogether 117 entries have been accepted and main opposition for Chris will certainly come from the entries for 'Didi' Willi Lux (Fiat 131 Abarth), Gilbert Staepelaere/Fred Franssen (Escort RS1800), Guy Colsoul/Alain Lopes (Opel Kadett GT/E Group 2) and Jean Dumont/J. Materne (Opel Kadett GT/E Group 1). Other entries received include two Group 2 Skodas

for Stratoplan Kvaizar and Vaclav Blahna. British crews also include Mike Bayliss/Barry Cooper and Peter Rook/David Booth in Group 4 Escorts and a various assortment of other teams in such cars as Group 2 Dolomite Sprints and Opel Kadett GT/E and even a Group 2 Escort Mexico.

The event, which is based in the Ardennes Mountains in Belgium, starts on the Friday evening with a ten hour section, including three laps (or rondes), and then restarts on the Saturday for the final 17-hour, five-lap section. It is during the second part that the only lap to take place in daylight will be held.

Tarmac details

The Tarmac Rally Organisers' Association have put out a news sheet with all the details of their 1978 Tarmac Championship including, dates, eligible cars, awards and points.

The rounds of the series are Galway International Rally (February 10 to 12), Benson and Hedges Circuit of Ireland International Rally (March 24 to 28), Donegal International Rally (June 16 to 18), Belfast Telegraph Ulster Rally (September 1 and 2), Manx Trophy International Rally (September 15 and 16) and B&I Cork 20 International Rally (October 7 and 8).

It is only open to cars complying with FIA Appendix J Groups 1 to 4 in the following classes: Class 1—Group 1 up to 1300cc; Class 2—Group 1 1300cc to 1600cc; Class 3—Group 1 over 1600cc; Class 4—Other cars up to 1300cc; Class 5—Other cars 1300cc to 1600cc; Class 6—Other cars over 1600cc.

The overall championship winner will receive £500 and each class winner £200 with the points on each round being 15, 10, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 overall and 9, 6, 4, 3, 2, 1 per class. All rounds of the series will count.

David looks abroad

With just about every manufacturer having announced their rally plans for 1978 the whole picture of what will be happening this year looked fairly complete. But up until last Thursday there was still one very important gap in what was happening and that was not from a manufacturer, but from David Sutton.

There is no one who will dispute that David and his business, David Sutton Cars, is the most successful company rallying in this country outside the works teams—and in many cases he has shown the works teams the way. Dare we yet again mention Penti Airikkala's performance on the 1976 RAC Rally when he so nearly won, beating all the world's top drivers and teams in an Escort run by David's Acton firm.

Poor David has been unmercifully hounded by the press over the past months, who wanted to know what deals he had got for this year, for David has never failed to come up with something new and interesting.

It was, therefore, quite surprising to hear David apologising for having nothing new and startling to tell us. But the more he explained just what he would be doing next year, the more apparent it became just how much prestige he has all over the world and how his successes have not gone unnoticed. For David Sutton Cars most of their 1978 business lies outside the UK in countries as far flung as Finland, Belgium, Zambia, Kenya and Paraguay.

The order book and the workshop of the company is full with work preparing cars for these far flung customers and, though a new full rally spec Group 1 RS2000 is £9,000 and a Group 4 RS1800 is £16,500, the results that their cars achieve mean that there are plenty of people prepared to invest their money in these machines.

David quite honestly admitted that he must go where he can best promote the interests of his company and this is certainly abroad. As all the orders have come after overseas successes and not those in this country.

Apart from all the customer work, the rallies that David will be taking cars to start with the Galway (where he is running his wife and business partner, Jill Robinson, and Gilbert Staepelaere) and include all rounds of the Open series, where he is entering a Group 1 RS2000 for David Robbins.

Jill has always run her car separately from the company, with the team preparing it but Jill finding her own sponsorship deals. Having won the ladies

section of the Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship for three years, she has nothing left to prove here, so with Castrol backing her for the tenth year she is embarking on a fascinating year in an RS1800. Her rallies include the Safari, the Total for Ford in South Africa and the Trans Chaco Rally in South America.

Last year David introduced Tatu Vatanen to this country with disastrous results. But both David and Ari think that Tatu has great potential, so he is sending a Group 1 RS2000 over to Finland for Tatu to do the national championship with Teboil sponsorship.

Another idea David had, which seems most popular, is that of rent a rally, rather than rent a car. He has a Group 4 RS1800 which he will put out on any rally for any driver as a complete package which includes service crews, tyres, hotel accommodation and all the important things on the rally that get the car to the end. The measure of the popularity of this idea can be seen by the fact that he has had about 60 enquiries about this. The car he will be using for this will be the ex-Penti, ex-Ari car that has been reshelved since Tatu drove it on the Castrol '77.

One of David's prides and joys is also the newly completed black tarmac car which Gilbert will be taking out for the first time on Galway. David went into raptures about how beautiful this car looked and was only brought down to earth a little by his wife's comment that in that colour it reminded her of a hearse!

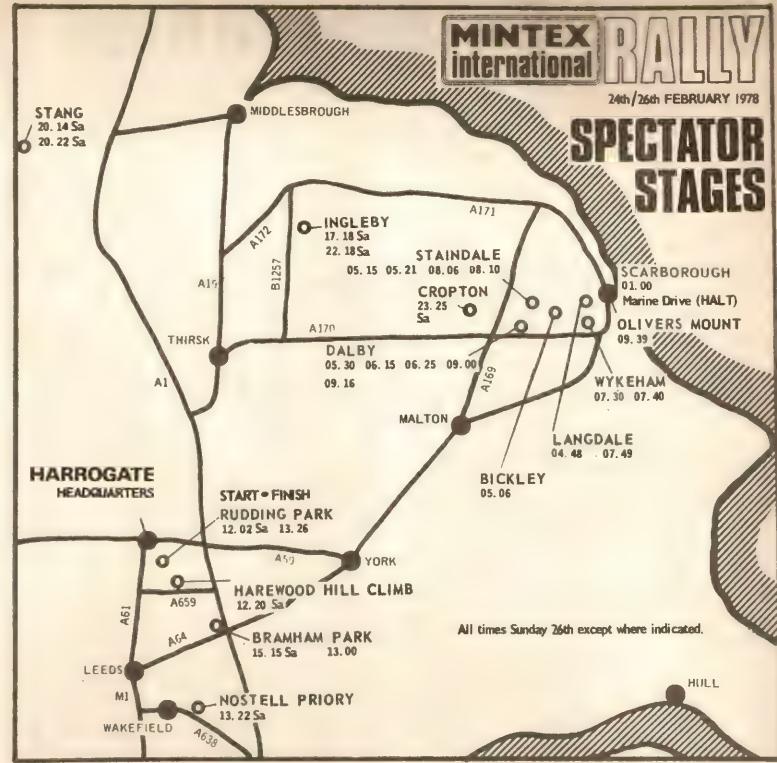
Although this year David has no direct link with Ford, he did emphasise how very appreciative he was of the help and support they had given him over the years since their first association in 1963, and it seems unlikely with his past wins for them that they will not get together again.

David is very keen to also put 'stars' in his cars for one-off events, and admitted that he had had discussions with both Penti and Ari on this subject and things looked good for this to go ahead.

Last year for the first time David joined up with Shell to run Ari's Gandy car and so successful was their association that they have teamed up again for 1978, and also his cars will again be running on Dunlop for the second year.

Even though many firms and manufacturers have had to talk about cut backs and reduction in work it was so nice to see basically privateers in rallying doing so well.

David Sutton Cars have a full order book and a full workshop for 1978.



Mintex adds Group 5

With just over four weeks to go before the start of the first round of the Sedan Products Open Championship (the Mintex on February 25/26), the organisers have announced the inclusion of a Group 5 class. This will be just one class for all capacities and the cars must comply with the regulations in the 1977 FIA Year Book. Although these cars will be eligible for the Mintex Rally Awards and will be included in the general classification they will not be eligible for the Open Championship points or awards. For this class only, the organisers, the De Lacy Motor Club, are holding entries open until Monday, January 30.

One surprising entry the organisers have received is from America for an RS1800 for John Buffum..

The rally should certainly provide a very close battle for top honours, and anyone predicting a winner would be very brave. With Ford very much back in the fray with Roger Clark, Hannu Mikkola and Russell Brookes they stand a very good chance of winning the rally again. But one man who will certainly be determined to turn his second in last year's event to a win this year will be Penti Airikkala in the Chevette. One thing is certain and that is it will be a battle to the finish as long as none of the cars has any major mechanical disasters.

The organisers have released, very sensibly, in plenty of time a list of spectator stages and expected arrival times for the first cars, which are as follows.

Saturday: Rudding Park 1 (12.02), Harewood Hillclimb (12.20), Nostel Priory (13.22), Bramham Park 1 (15.15), Ingleby 1 (17.18), Stang 1 (20.14), Ingleby 2 (22.18), Cropton (23.25). Sunday: Scarborough Meal Halt Marine Drive (01.00), Langdale 1 (04.48), Bickley (05.06), Staindale 1 (05.15), Staindale 2 (05.21), Dalby 1 (05.30), Dalby 2 (06.15), Dalby 3 (06.25), Wykeham 1 (07.30), Wykeham 2 (07.40), Langdale 2 (07.49), Staindale 3 (08.06), Staindale 4 (08.10), Dalby 4 (09.00), Dalby 5 (09.16), Olivers Mount (09.30), Bramham Park 2 (13.00) and Rudding Park 2 (13.26).



Penti—facing strong Ford challenge.

Spectators intending to visit any of these stages should, however, note that all the times may vary by up to 30 minutes.

The provisional top 20 is as follows, with the organisers being prepared to slot in any last minute entries in the Group 5 class: Hannu Mikkola/Arne Hertz (RS1800); Markku Alen/Illa Kivimaki (Fiat 131 Abarth); Russell Brookes/John Brown (RS1800); Penti Airikkala/Mike Nicholson (Vauxhall Chevette); Roger Clark/Jim Porter (RS1800); Tony Pond/Fred Gallagher (Triumph TR7); Kyosti Hämäläinen/Philip Boland (RS1800); Andy Dawson/Stuart Pegg (Datsun Violet); John Taylor/Phil Short (RS1800); Tony Drummond/David Curry (RS1800); Nigel Rockey/TBN (RS1800); Paul Faulkner/Monty Peters (RS1800); Graham Elsmore/Stuart Harrold (RS1800); Jim McRae/Ian Muir (Vauxhall Chevette); 'Piggy' Thompson/Alan Greenwood (Porsche Carrera); John Buffum/TBN (RS1800); Brian Culcheth/Johnstone Syer (Opel Kadett GTE); Tony Fowkes/Bryan Harris (RS1800); Terry Kaby/Brian Rainbow (Triumph Dolomite Sprint); Terje Braathen/One Braathen (Opel Kadett GT E).

Drew's new car

Thankfully we have seen the last of Drew Gallacher trying to coax his rather old and tired RS1600 around rallies, for in 1978 he will be out in an RS1800 with full sponsorship from Lockhart, a firm of Glasgow builders.

Drew and regular partner David McHarg will be doing the Castrol/AUTOSPORT and *The Scotsman* Championships in the car, which is the ex-Graham Elsmore 1977 Castrol/AUTOSPORT car. They have purchased it, along with its AVJ engine which was new for the Wyedean, and the car itself has only done six events. As well as the original engine, they have a BDG (prepared by John Fyda of Agra Engineering of Dundee) and enough spares to cover all foreseeable disasters on any of the rounds.

They will be known as Team Lockhart and the car will be painted in the sponsor's livery of white, black and olive green. It is an all-Scottish team with Ian Muir as Team Manager and they will have the Cross of St Andrew painted on the car.

Unfortunately, Drew's tatty car last year did nothing for his image, but he is looking to change that with the new car and has confidence that he can win the championships. Also on the programme will be the RAC Rally and the



Gallacher—new car at last!

first outing will be on this weekend's Snowman Rally.

Although this is Lockhart's first major sponsorship of a car, they have been involved with the Burmah Rally for about six years by putting up the Man of the Rally award. The car will also be supported by Shell and run on Dunlops.

Off to the Highlands

The Highland Car Club get the Scottish rally scene off to a start this weekend with their Snowman Rally, which will be using stages round the Inverness and Great Glen areas on Saturday. The rally is also the first round of *The Scotsman* championship and should see an interesting duel between reigning champion Charles Samson and last year's winner Drew Gallacher in his newly acquired RS1800.

It seems that the route being used is similar to that for the 1977 event. Last year the stages were very hard and icy and could well be the same this year, as up to the beginning of the week there had been little snow in the area. The total route is about 250 miles with 75 of these on stages.

Major sponsor for the event is Mercury Motor Inns. The organisers will use the Inn in Nairn Road, Inverness as the Rally HQ and the Inn in Fort William (map reference 41/083712) as the hour lunch halt from 12.34 on Saturday.

Also supporting the event will be

Cordiners Garage of Inverness and J. A. Mackay, jewellers from Fort William. The rally will be using Cordiners' premises in Harbour Road (map reference 26/672460) for scrutineering on Friday night.

There will also be a forum on the Friday night in Rally HQ organised by *The Press & Journal*. This starts at 7.30, will have a panel of rally drivers chaired by Hugh McNeill and also includes films.

The top entries are as follows:

1. Drew Gallacher/David McHarg (RS1800); 2. Charles Samson/Roger Anderson (RS1800); 3. Alan Arnell/Ian Butterly (Vauxhall Magnum); 4. Alistair Brearley/Roger Turnbull (Opel Kadett GT/E); 5. Bill Taylor/Ian Maciver (RS1800); 6. Ian Wilson/Charlie Young (Vauxhall Chevette); 7. Donald Heggie/TBN (RS1800); 8. Ken Wood/Peter Brown (Triumph TR7); 9. Andrew Smith/Joe Meehan (Escort); 10. Peter Tooley/David Hodges (Triumph TR7); 11. Keith Sheddron-Brown/William Matheson (RS1800); 12. Ivor Clark/Ian Parry (Vauxhall Magnum); 13. —; 14. Vince Finlayson/Sandy Stewart (Chrysler Avenger GT); 15. John Nicol/James Leighton (Escort Sport); 16. Arthur Jasper/Angus MacPherson (Escort); 17. David Porter/Peter Holmes (Vauxhall Magnum); 18. Alistair Campbell/Alistair Robertson (Escort); 19. John Connor/Neil Ewing (RS1800); 20. Jimmy Horne/George Wilson (Escort).

SPECTATOR INFORMATION

Control	Location	MR/Start	MR/Finish	First car due
Start	Mercury Motor Inn	26/683457	—	08.01
SS1	Glenurquhart 1	—	26/449298	08.49
SS2	Portclair 1	—	34/424151	09.44
SS5	Glengarry 1	34/283012	—	10.42
SS7	Mandalay 1	—	34/301987	10.59
SS8	Glenloy 1	34/148816	34/143812	11.43
SS9	Torlundy	41/146771	41/147773	12.07
M.C.1 in	Mercury Motor Inn	—	41/080712	12.34
M.C.1 out	Mercury Motor Inn	41/080712	—	13.34
SS10	Glenrigh	41/025635	41/045659	13.47
SS11	Leanachan	41/146771	—	14.16
SS12	Glenloy 2	34/148816	34/143812	14.48
SS13	Mandalay 2	34/301987	—	15.35
SS15	Glengarry 4	—	34/283012	15.54
SS18	Portclair 2	34/424151	—	16.46
SS19	Glenurquhart 2	—	26/449298	17.41
M.C.2	Mercury Motor Inn	—	26/683457	18.41

Escort 1300 Open Day

To make sure that the Ford Escort 1300 Rally Championship is as straightforward and foolproof as possible, particularly where the car specification is concerned, all prospective competitors, plus cars, are being invited to an Open Day. The Open Day is being held at

Bristol Street Motors, Bristol Street, Birmingham, from 10am to 4pm on Saturday, February 4. In attendance to answer queries and check anything on the cars will be Graham Robson, John Griffiths and John Horton.

Swedish second round

It is the second round of the Swedish Rally Championship this Saturday with the Winter Trophy Rally based in the steel making town of Sandviken.

Altogether 210 entries have been accepted for the 300kms event, which includes 170kms of special stages. All the country's leading drivers will be out again—Stig Blomqvist (16-valve Saab 99EMS), Per Eklund (Group 1 Saab 99), Bror Danielsson (G1 Opel Kadett GT/E), Anders Kullang (Group 2 Opel

Kadett GT/E), Leif Asterhag (Toyota Corolla) and Ingvar Carlsson (16-valve BMW 320).

Although the first round was a walk-over for Opel, with reliability from the other cars anything could happen. In fact, on the first round of the series Blomqvist was leading until he dropped out, and the other extremely quick cars were those driven by Asterhag and Carlsson.

Briefly . . .

● Total took a look at rallying in this country when they sponsored Kyosti Hämäläinen on the RAC Rally and obviously liked what they saw, as they are sponsoring his RS1800 on the Sedan Products Open Series this year.

● The official works Chrysler Sunbeam will have its competition debut in Galway in the hands of Bernard Unett with Ulster's Terry Harryman as his co-driver. The car Bernard will be driving will have the 1800cc engine previously fitted to rally Avengers.

● Hoping to change from his one litre Imp to an Escort for the Ford Escort 1300 Championship in the Esso/BTRDA Series is John Weatherley. John started rallying last year in the Imp after being a British Kart Champion and European Team Manager. He went particularly well in his Imp on the recent Virgo Galaxy rally, when he was robbed of a certain fourth overall by running out of petrol.

● Any English competitors who are interested in going over to Finland to do the Hankiralli (which is the weekend before the Mintex) should contact Philip Boland on Gargrave 353 during the day or Addingham 830170 at night, as he has regulations and information on the event.

● Anyone interested in attending the Clubman meeting organised between Clubman competitors and the RAC by Team Knowdale should note that it will be held on Sunday, February 5 and not January 29 as previously advertised and should ring John Clegg on Littleborough 78342.

● Willie Rutherford will be receiving support from Esso this year for his Group 5 Mazda Hatchback on the Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship, so part of the car's livery will be the famous leaping tiger.

● If you have not yet put in your entry for the Gwynedd Rally, the first round of the Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship, it is not too late. The organisers can take up to 150 entries and on Monday they still had 20 spare places. Anyone still interested should ring entries secretary Mrs Barbara Jones on 0248 713693.

● After some initial preparation work on the shell of Graham Elsmore's Escort by Peter Harrison, the car is now nearing completion at the Thomas Motors premises in Blackpool. As before, the car will be in the very capable hands of Thomas Motors' experienced mechanics Mick Longan and Peter Mackay.

● Preci-Spark will again be sponsoring Group 1 RS2000s in the Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship for David and Godfrey Jones in 1978. Although Rob Roebuck will be co-driving for the team they are also looking for someone else, preferably based in the Midlands or eastern part of the country. Any interested co-driver with some experience should ring Rob in the evenings on Brentwood 216577.

● Citroen are back on the rally scene with an official works team, with which they initially intend to contest the Portuguese and Acropolis WCR events and the Senegal Rally. Driving the virtually standard CXs will be Achim Warmbold and Jean-Paul Luc and Citroen are hoping to announce other events for the drivers shortly.

● If anyone is looking for an experienced co-driver to do the Sedan Products Open championship with them, then Derek Tucker might be just the person. After nearly three years with Nigel Rockey, Derek is without a ride for next year. His navigating experience goes back to 1960 and he has been with the likes of Russell Brookes and Colin Malkin. Derek can be contacted in the evenings on 0792 862064.

● From February 1 the Esso Motor Sport Centre will be moving and after that date anyone wishing to contact John Foden should write to him at PO Box 6, Pangbourne, Reading, RG8 7AW. Also Esso are offering bonus schemes for the Esso/BTRDA, Ford Escort 1300 and Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championships, so anyone interested should write to John as soon as possible.

● Hoping to have a successful year in the 1300cc class of the Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship is Phil Lilly from Leeds in a Mini Clubman. Phil rallied this car last year and won his class on the Cheltenham Festival Rally. Although he is unsponsored, he is getting some assistance from Coopers of Oulton, Shell, Champion, Dunlop and Leyland and will be out on the Gwynedd with Ken Hardgrave as co-driver.

● Steve Smith, who campaigned a Group 1 RS2000 last year for Bond of Pocklington, is looking for a co-sponsor for his attack in the same car on this year's championship. Bond have had to pull out of sponsorship and, although Steve has found a Ford Rally Sport dealer with some support, he still needs some extra help.

● Champion have come up with a very attractive bonus scheme for the Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship. The scheme, per rally, will be £60, £40 and £20 for the first three overall and the first three in Group 1, plus £30 for each class winner. All people eligible for the scheme must wear two decals and information can be obtained from John Glover, Champion Sparking Plug Co, P.O. Box 7, Great South West Road, Feltham, Middlesex, TW14 0PN.

● Consolidated Pneumatic have announced that, for the third year running, they will be sponsoring the Granite City Rally. This rally, which is being run for the tenth year by the Aberdeen and DMC, is on Saturday, April 22 and is a round of the Castrol/AUTOSPORT Championship. Regulations for the rally will be available at the end of this month from Bob Shearer, 28 Gordon Place, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen, tel: Aberdeen 703550.



It was after Markku Alen's win for them in Portugal that Fiat decided to contest the remaining WCR rounds.

Two-horse race

PETER NEWTON reviews the Fiat versus Ford duel in the World Rally Championship.

Last year's battle for the World Rally Championship of Makes was generally rated as an enthralling affair by those who understood its scoring system or who understood rallying. Generally the series was better promoted than in the past (largely, one suspects, because the Italians actually took the trouble to invite journalists to watch, and because for the first time more than one manufacturer expressed a serious interest in trying to win it!).

Both participants who made it what it was—Fiat and Ford of Britain—often spoke of the 'good' it was doing for international rallying, how the series was helping to 'promote the sport' internationally, and so on. Most laymen are aware that Niki Lauda is the current World Champion. Most of us are also aware that a man named James Hunt became the first English World Champion since Graham Hill in 1976. But how many of us are aware of who won the World Rally Championship for Makes in 1976? A good guess would be Lancia, but surely the point is obvious: the WCR is poorly supported because of its lack of status outside the 'teacup' of the rally world. When are the CSI going to realise that rallying, like almost any other sport worthy of the name, requires a live champion as well as a marque name, and that the accent must be on the former?

Vested manufacturer interest may still be preventing *avant garde* ideas from becoming reality, but the promotional absurdity of the current situation can best be appreciated if once again one turns to the racing analogy. McLaren, Tyrrell *et al* refuse to race in Argentina because Reutemann has an intrinsic advantage there . . . James Hunt is chased by six teams waving massive cheques for his services at the British GP . . . race day dawns wet in Austria so the telegrams summoning Jacky Ickx arrive thick and fast on the Belgian's doorstep.

At a time when we conceive rallying as such a complete sport, complete in teamwork, and all-round skills in driving talent, stamina, will to win and so on, manufacturers are coincidentally creating a specialist market in rally drivers because individual events have assumed more importance than championships.

Last year the results of such 'horses for courses' dabbling produced an unofficial world champion who would not have belonged to the team which actually won the championship—Bjorn Waldegaard. This assumes that one's criteria for such a judgment concern the number of placings taken in the WCR itself, and not in the futile FIA Cup for Rally Drivers, whose passing scarcely deserves a line of explanation but for the fact that its very lunacy should be brought out into the open. At one point we were informed that there were over 50 rallies counting towards this meaningless affection, of which the Italian press (on account of Lancia) made so much, and no one else knew anything about. Coefficients, dropped scores,

minimum appearances, clashing fixtures—they all played a part in this absurd charade. . . Is it any wonder that rallying gets the publicity it deserves? As a sop to those who had desired a proper WCR for drivers, it was little short of an insult.

Trying to forget about this fatuous 'mumbo-jumbo' was one thing, trying to understand the 'new for '77' WCR scoring system was quite another! What the CSI intended at the beginning of the year—namely that overall scores on each rally depended on positions overall and in the respective Group (1-4), while Group points depended on Group scores alone—as compared with what a number of learned observers construed as a result, were often two entirely different things. We gather that Paris could not even get it right in the end, either. Their final results sheet was apparently smeared with more than one deliberate error!

So Waldegaard is our most worthy unofficial World Champion with three wins (Acropolis, Safari and RAC), one second place (Portugal), one third place (Finland), and one fifth place (San Remo). Bjorn achieved the lion's share of Ford's point but credit must also be given to Kyosti Hämäläinen, who provided the company with their fourth victory of the year (1000 Lakes), and gave them valuable points in Sweden thanks to an excellent Group 1 result. This also opened that manufacturer's eyes to the possibility of G1 participation where outright victory might have seemed like a pipe-dream. Group 1 it was seen, promised almost as many points as Group 4 in some events.



Jyosti Hämäläinen made the transition from Group 1 to Group 4 with incredible ease, and it was surely this Finn's personal determination to do well on his home event that gave Ford their 1000 Lakes victory.

In general, Ford used a combination of their three regular drivers, Waldegaard, Roger Clark and Ari Vatanen, with the exception of Corsica, where Jean-Pierre Nicolas and Russell Brookes were employed, and of Finland, where Hämäläinen was given his chance. However, Fiat achieved their eventual hard fought victory in circumstances as different as their philosophy. Each of their five wins was achieved by a different driver, and the team frequently comprised as many as six drivers—all being stage-managed in style by that suave and shrewd 'political animal', Daniele Audetto.

Fiat made the decision to contest the remainder of the WCR after beating Ford in Portugal. The way in which they attained this goal was

Waldegaard—unofficial World Champion.

systematic and ruthless; but it was also logical, and enlightened from a promotional standpoint. When your mandate is to a win a championship, and a large budget exists with which to do it, there are a number of ways in which to achieve the same end. Fiat used their remarkable resources with considerable aplomb to field comparatively vast teams at any given rally. Such appearances gave them a psychological advantage, but it also gave them strength in depth—a feature which time and again saved them from embarrassment.

Simo Lampinen, who never won a single WCR round and who scored only one second place (when he drove tremendously to beat Roger Clark in Quebec) and whose role in the

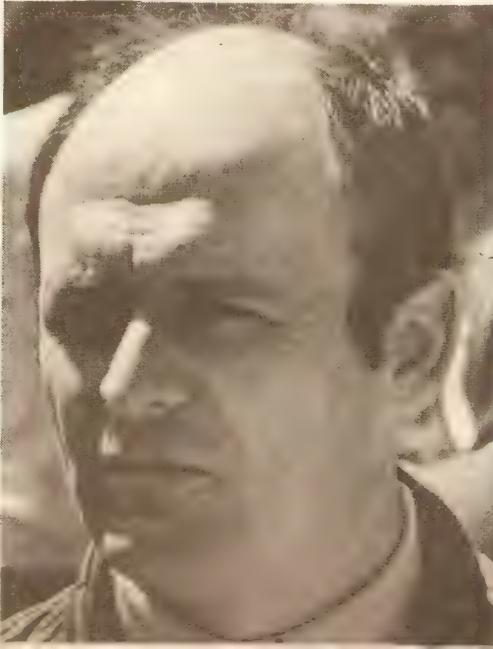
Fiat entourage was well known as that of the anchor man, still managed to finish second overall in the unofficial driver's WCR. This indicates how useful such depth became to the fortunes of a car in only its second year of major international competition.

During the year, estimates of Fiat financial, political and numerical involvement in the WCR increased as more journalists grabbed this rare opportunity for sensationalism in a sport that so often shies away from any kind of publicity, reserving its best stories for the chosen and trusted few. In such a world, the cosmopolitan presence of the Italian invaders (and they really did turn up in strength!) was

Alen—Portugal winner for Fiat.



Darniche—European Champion.



Two-horse race

continued

Inevitably the subject of hearsay and exaggerated comment, especially as their appearance often coincided with some controversy or another.

Fiat preparations were truly awesome, particularly towards the end of the season when it became clear that the entire championship would be decided on the results of San Remo and/or Corsica, the Italian backyard where their 131 was at its asphalt best.

Curiously, this was also the time when Boreham, having received an additional budget to pursue and press home the advantage gained from the Acropolis and 1000 Lakes, made a

series of serious mistakes which were to allow the championship to drift inexorably back into the hands of the delighted Italians. Quebec was undeniably a Ford rally, and it was cruel misfortune which robbed them of victory (Vatanen for some reason—a threat?—decided to behave himself, and drove immaculately, but they made the error of only taking two cars). One might imagine that the cost of taking two or three cars to such far-flung rally areas does not differ by that much, so why was there a decision to take only two? At the time Russell Brookes was being hard-pressed by Vauxhall's Penti Airikkala on the home front, but surely a third car could have been found.

Secondly, while Roger Clark had, it is true, experienced an event in Canada at a prior date on the Shell 4000, Quebec last year proved to be one of the simplest reconnaissance rallies on the calendar and previous experience of Canadian conditions did not, relatively speaking, count for that much. A better choice perhaps might have been Waldegaard or Brookes.

Finally, during the rally itself, Clark was overhauled and beaten for second place by an inspired Lampinen. Not having been there, I don't know the circumstances of that last night, but one is forced to raise one's eyebrows a little at the thought of Clark in an RS1800 being beaten in a forest by Simo Lampinen in a Fiat.

This was where the Boreham slide really began. They really had to win this one, and should have done so easily. In addition they should have denied Fiat second and possibly third place as well. This was Boreham's rally, and they simply threw away the opportunity to press home the advantage gained so professionally by the team in Greece and Finland.

If Quebec was a miscalculation, then San Remo was a nightmare. Boreham were unlucky with the weather in that their hastily developed and built coil sprung (rear) Escort had only been tested in dry conditions at Cadwell Park, and for two of the San Remo rally's three days, the heavens were well and truly open. But luck



The manufacturers who finished third and fourth in the WCR were Toyota and Opel. Above: Ove Andersson takes his Celica to third in Portugal. Below: Walter Rohrl (the man courted by Fiat in 1977) in action on the Acropolis with his Kadett GT/E.





The European Rally Championship of Drivers was won by Bernard Darniche in a Chardonnet Lancia Stratos, but during the year he also had works drives on WCR events such as the Monte Carlo in an Alitalia Stratos.

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP FOR MAKES

- 1 Fiat
- 2 Ford
- 3 Toyota
- 4 Opel
- 5 Lancia
- 6 Datsun
- 7 Porsche
- 8 Saab
- 9 Chrysler
- 10 Mitsubishi
- 11 Peugeot
- 12 Seat
- 13 Citroen
- 14 Mazda
- 15 Renault Alpine
- 16 Leyland
- 17 Volvo
- 18 Skoda
- 19 Renault
- 20 Lada

**Best 8 scores*

Best 8 scores

**EUROPEAN
RALLY
CHAMPIONSHIP
OF DRIVERS**

Coefficient

- 1 B. Darniche
- 2 M. Mouton
- 3 A. Vatanen
- 4 R. Brookes
- 5 T. Pond
- 6 B. Fernandez
- 7 B. Coleman
- 8 S. Canellas
- 9 M. Vernini
- 10 G. Staepelaere
- 11 M. Pregliasco
- 12 A. Warmbold
- 13 A. Zanini
- 14 A. Dawson
- 15 S. Munar

Code des Dames

Two-horse race

continued

had nothing to do with the fact that Dunlop's answers to the wet weather, the tarmac and the new chassis specification were simply inadequate. The new car, so promising in the dry, proved a nightmare in the wet, and one may surmise that only a driver of Waldegaard's immense talent could have got it so competitively to the finish.

This was, to my mind, unquestionably his finest drive of the season in a car which snapped from grotesque initial understeer to terminal oversteer in the corners with the gentility of a rabid mule. Had a petrol pipe not kinked as a result of an 'off', Waldegaard might still have finished third, despite the tyre handicap. Bjorn was an obvious choice for San Remo. A winner in the Stratos, he is probably the only non-Italian besides Andruet and Nicolas who is capable of winning here.

All of which leads one to wonder at perhaps the most incomprehensible decision of the WCR: namely that of sending Ari Vatanen as number two driver to contest a brutally fast and specialised tarmac rally. Ari's experience on tarmac is strictly limited, and although he proved he was capable of winning the Manx (a World Championship arena, mainly in darkness like San Remo) is an altogether different spectacle and psychological challenge. Vatanen, at that time, was mentally at a very low ebb following alternate mistakes and mechanical misfortune. He was also physically exhausted from the constant travelling demands which his European rally schedules were making upon him. In this context, the choice of Vatanen is hardly defensible. The fact that he most certainly did not disgrace himself before a minor 'off' (which put him out) is scarcely the point. More to the point is: who might have more effectively deputised?

On the basis of Corsica, where he drove a most mature rally, the answer might be Russell Brookes, then heavily committed to the British programme. French possibilities existed in Bernard Beguin and Jean-Pierre Nicolas.

But perhaps the real reason for Vatanen's presence was as much a lack of material resources as anything else. Ford at that time could only field one of their tarmac cars—it was the only one in existence, and really this has been the story of the season. There is a limit to how much a total of 25 dedicated and experienced men, working out of a small premises on an East Anglian aerodrome, can do—even if they happen to be among the best men avail-

Two-horse race

continued

able. . . And there's no doubt that if Boreham were ever to involve themselves in a chase like this in the future, they would first have to restructure and reorganise the nature of the place physically to produce and service more rally cars.

Fiat used a total of just over 20 cars throughout the entire season, but Boreham had nowhere near double figures. In Corsica, J-PN proved how competitive the tarmac Escort could be, but there was a further point which laymen were asking: why was it only now, after ten years of rallying experience, that Boreham were at last finalising a tarmac specification for the Escort. To go to San Remo with a partially developed car, and to Corsica with basically identical rubber(!), was not a satisfactory state of affairs when a World Championship was at stake.

One finds it amazing that Ford should still be searching for their ultimate tarmac specification while in the process of trying to win rallies. All the teams do it, of course; it's called washing one's linen in public. But it can be dangerous, and it's frequently unsuccessful (although Vauxhall did it with remarkable success last year). What one fails entirely to comprehend is why the sums have taken so long to complete.

So Ford did more than their fair share of losing this championship. In Portugal they lost the event through lack of suitable tyres; on the Safari they were lucky to win (it always seems to have a strong element of lottery) during one of the worst spells of wet weather seen in Kenya in recent years; in New Zealand, Vatanen managed to throw away a victory at least twice and probably three times; Acropolis was thoroughly convincing after Vatanen's singularly stupid accident. But the 1000 Lakes was a triumph for Ford, Hämäläinen, Waldegaard, and Peter Ashcroft, whose foresight initiated the project; and Quebec was a sobering disappointment just as the RAC was a thoroughly predictable and worthy success. If only it could all have hung on the RAC!

For Fiat's part, the factory official cars began badly by retiring on the Monte and leaving second place to Andruet, in the French entered Fiat, who thought he could have won had politics not dictated otherwise. In Sweden there was more disappointment for the official cars and only Lampinen finished, one place ahead of Hämäläinen's Group 1 RS2000; in fact they had to wait until Portugal for their first 'in-house' success when the experience of Markku Alen at this rally paid off handsomely.

Equipped with Pirelli P7s, he was left with an easy victory after Ford's puncture problems intervened.

Bacchelli recorded a success in New Zealand which must have added a few grey hairs to his blond head. After one of the longest forest rallies, he only just succeeded in coaxing an ailing car to the finish, and other 11th-hour dramas (eg, taking the wrong route on a special stage) put him so close to the flying Finn on his tail. The Acropolis was the team's nadir when only Lampinen (who had chosen the older specification car) finished after driveshaft case hardening procedures on a new batch of 'specials' went awry. In Finland, controversy (in the form of a large, strategically placed rock) was alleged to have been the cause of Alen's demise (but he had lost the battle already). From then, however, fortunes of the Fiat empire revived, and after being presented with Quebec, the massive preparations for the remaining two tarmac rounds went ahead amid an atmosphere of benign optimism.

Fiat never expected a battle such as this had been, so when they clinched the championship in Corsica it would have been understandable if their presence on the RAC had not been up to the strength normally seen throughout the year. It was thus a tribute to the team that they did appear in strength—making a number of servicing errors and losing their three fliers, but allowing us nevertheless to witness another fine drive from Simo Lampinen.

At the beginning of the season the Fiat 131 Abarth was very definitely not at its best on loose surfaces; and even worse on unpractised ones. Very stiff and prone to understeer, the Fiats improved markedly throughout the year thanks to the efforts of Giorgio Pianta and the Abarth engineers. However, perhaps the single most marked improvement to the car's loose surface handling was the arrival of Bilstein dampers about halfway through the season. In conjunction with softer springs, the RAC Rally Fiats handled with ease and precision. The car we saw on the Castrol '77 was a pointer of things to come, and Markku Alen proved well capable of keeping the car on the pace of the best Escorts.

Intrinsically, the 131 Abarth was at a disadvantage in the forest, however. Although in this environment its 150kg weight disadvantage was not so marked, it is a big car by comparison with an Escort, and although the engines were improved markedly throughout the year (especially by the use of dry sump equipment and revised throttle slides on the injection equipment) there was never more than 235bhp. This was respectable enough, but by the end of the year it was lagging behind the BDA once more.

In the British camp, the year saw the standardisation of racing L1 camshafts on Brian Hart's forest 'spec' engines, to the tune of 10 extra bhp at the top of the performance graph and, surprisingly, an equivalent increase in bottom end torque thanks to clever work on manifolding, carburettor tuning and camshaft timing. Allan Wilkinson's work, which began in Portugal, centred around standardising the RS1800's specification, and tuning the chassis. Subsequently he was involved in the coil spring rear suspension layout developed for San Remo and Corsica which proved such a success, and throughout the year the cars shed weight to reach a finale of 940kg in forest specification and rather less for tarmac use.

It is doubtful whether Ford would ever have had a better chance to win the World Championship than they did last year. Their cars were distinctly superior to the Fiats on loose surfaces, and on tarmac they were far from disgraced. There was always the question of numbers, however, and when a win and a second place are separated by only two points, you have to pack the entry lists, to be sure. That Boreham got so near to achieving the ultimate with such a small (comparatively) operation, speaks volumes for the entire team.

Without this effort, the 1977 World Championship would have been just another year instead of the vintage affair that it was turned out to be. This struggle has assumed the central point of this discussion, simply because it proved to be the talking point of the season. My apologies to Toyota, Opel, Lancia, Saab and the other manufacturers who contested the WCR. There is no need to present a blow-by-blow account of how they did or did not accomplish their results—that's water under the bridge.

Perhaps the CSI should now try positively to attract the competition it was fortunate enough to have received as a matter of luck! ■



Bjorn Waldegaard's performance for Ford in 1977 was nothing short of incredible. As well as his three outright wins, he had several high placings including second in Portugal, where he is pictured driving with the style that marked him out as being a worthy unofficial World Champion.





"The screams of the supercharger, the smell of methanol." Bolster samples Tazio Nuvolari's Maserati.

Scirocco tops

JOHN BOLSTER reviews another memorable year 'on the road' for AUTOSPORT

This is not intended to be an analysis of the 1977 AUTOSPORT road tests. To serve any useful purpose, such an article would need to be long and detailed, so that every car could have a fair crack of the whip; it would also stand a good chance of being heavy and boring. I propose, therefore, to mix a little whisky with the porridge, and if the narrative occasionally strays from the road on to Donington or the Nürburgring, or even from four wheels to three wheels or two, so much the better.

To set the scene, let us start with the most memorable motoring event of the year, or of any year for that matter. I am lucky enough to have cherished an ancient Rolls-Royce since I was a young man, and I scarcely believed Col Eric Barrass, of the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts Club, when he told me to start polishing it for a royal occasion. Yet, incredibly, it came to pass, and one of the first events of the Silver Jubilee celebrations was an immense parade of Rolls-Royce cars before Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor castle. They had assembled from all over the world, even from Australia, and as they were arranged in order of seniority, my 1911 Silver Ghost was one of the earlier cars to be presented.

No racing driver, on his last lap, has ever feared a breakdown as much as I did when the old Ghost glided silently into the Inner Quadrangle of the castle, but all went well and as we drove down the Long Walk, a Battle of Britain Spitfire, with its Rolls-Royce Merlin engine, swooped low over us and dipped in salute.

It is interesting that the latest Rolls-Royce, the Silver Shadow II, resembles the ancestral Silver Ghost in having light, high-gear steering. I went to Spain to drive the car, before it was announced, and found that the new rack and pinion, along with some suspension tweaks, has quite transformed its character. One is tempted to chuck it around like a small sports car and though I won't hear a word against the Ghost, I have to admit that the Shadow has better brakes—much better!

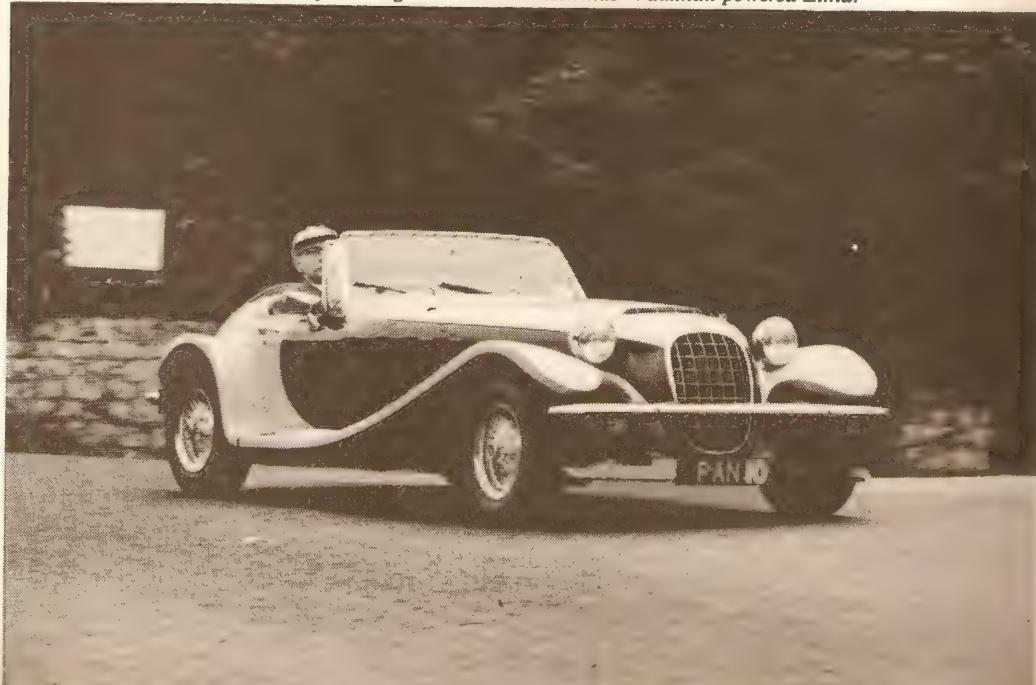
Going back to the beginning of the alphabet, I seem to have driven quite a few Alfa Romeos during the year, as well as going to Italy to talk racing and rallies with drivers and engineers. As an economical car with impeccable handling, the Alfasud has become a favourite with the younger generation. However, it could certainly do with a bit more power and so I was glad to

test one with a twin carburettor conversion by Weber, which I can recommend. Much more ambitious was a 1600cc version, bored and stroked by Gordon Allen, the crankshaft man. For me, the car was completely transformed, for I do like some torque in the middle ranges as well as power at the top end.

I enjoyed testing the Alfasud Sprint, which has a beautiful coupé body as well as an enlarged engine, and even long-legged people can be comfortable on the back seats. An entirely different car is the exciting new Giulietta, which drives its rear wheels instead of its front, with clutch, gearbox, and final drive at the back and the engine forward-mounted. The car handled beautifully on the mountainous roads of Sicily and this is certainly the most refined Alfa yet.

The name of Bentley still recalls the great, green cars which dominated Le Mans, and so to drive the lovingly rebuilt Mark VI of Mallalieu Engineering was pure nostalgia. Nothing can

"One of the best open sports cars you can get". Panther Westwinds' Vauxhall-powered Lima.



touch an open car when the sun shines, but above all, this beautiful machine emphasised that to reduce the weight by half a ton is far better than to force the engine to give another 50bhp. Weight is the enemy, and every designer should have those words emblazoned upon his wall.

That motto is again recalled by the many BMW cars I drove during the year. The BMW 3.0 Si four-door saloon was a fabulous car, as its 132mph maximum and 0-60mph in 7.6s testifies. Though it was a comparatively old model, near the end of its production run, it could beat the much more expensive 633 CSi coupé, simply because it was lighter, and its responsiveness made it a joy to handle. I drove its replacement 7-series saloons, with 2.8, 3.0 and 3.3 litre engines, the last having fuel injection, but none of them was my sort of car. Bigger, more impressive, and with vast interior space, this is the car *par excellence* for the portly business executive, but how one misses that instant response to a whiff of throttle which only a light car can give! All is not lost, however, for a short drive in the 528i showed that the old BMW magic has not been forgotten and I am eagerly anticipating full road test.

The Chrysler Avenger has been around for quite a while, but it has recently undergone a considerable facelift and its production has been transferred to Scotland, where the brand new Sunbeam hatchback is now made alongside it. The Avenger handles well and if its ride is a bit choppy, this is something that the British don't seem to mind. In comparison, both the ride and the general refinement of the Sunbeam are better, as befits a later design.

Technically, Citroëns still have the most advanced chassis on the market. The GS, with its flat-four, air-cooled engine, has many similarities to the big CX models but at an astonishingly reasonable price. In the past, it has excelled in everything bar fuel economy, but a new 1130cc engine makes the G Special a class leader in this important respect. The low-speed torque is not outstanding, but the 95mph maximum is excellent.

The Citroën CX 2400 GTi is a far more costly car, but at really high cruising speeds it is probably more economical than anything else on the road. The smoothness and flexibility of the big four-cylinder engine are almost beyond belief, and settings have been chosen for the self-levelling suspension that make this a real driver's car. The appearance is superb and though the fat and lethargic may find the steering a bit quick, I loved it because it reminded me of a top-class motorcycle.

Speaking of two-wheelers, I managed rather less riding than usual last year, but I did attend the Guild test-day, organised by Richard Hudson-Evans. This confirmed my dislike of the

huge, petrol-guzzling super-bikes, so beloved of what used to be called the "Promenade-Percies". For serious riding, something much lighter is greatly to be preferred, and it will be way ahead of the super-bikes, with their frequent refuelling stops, at the end of a day's march.

The Colt 1600 GSR is a compact 2-door saloon that normally has a 1200cc unit, its bound to be a little fun-car, and it is. The bigger engine has the special Colt balancing shafts that cancel out the secondary vibrations, plus a delicious 5-speed gearbox, and such taut handling is rather unexpected in a Japanese car.

Another unusual Japanese car is the Datsun 260Z, an attractive 2-seater coupé with a refined six-cylinder engine. A very pleasant machine for long journeys or commuting, it is not the ball of fire that the old 240Z was, largely due to anti-pollution regulations, no doubt, but it's still a 115mph car.

Ferraris are always exciting and the Berlinetta Boxer is the most dramatic of all. I don't think there's anywhere in England where its 188mph maximum can be attained, let alone held, and I suppose it's rather naughty to try. However, unlike earlier Ferraris, it is completely tractable when driven slowly and the toothed-belt camshaft drives have greatly reduced the mechanical noise. Although an inexperienced driver could be in serious trouble if he applied too much power, the BB is remarkably easy to drive if a little discretion is used. A car for the very few, and of restricted use because of its two seats and lack of luggage space, it is nevertheless a privilege to have driven this engineering masterpiece.

Much more practical is the 400, Ferraris big 12-cylinder luxury car. Some enthusiasts were shocked when the Commendatore went over to automatic transmission, but it works surprisingly well with the high-revving engine. In other respects, however, this is still a traditional Ferrari, with all the usual sounds and a ride that is by no means soft.

Most manufacturers continue to ruin their cars when they try to improve them, but the Fiat engineers are a notable exception. They have dared to up-date their best-seller, the 127, and they have actually done all the right things. With higher gearing, the little machine is far quieter and more economical, while a deeper tailgate gives easier access to the remarkably large luggage space. A new 1050cc engine, with a belt-driven overhead-camshaft, is available for up-market versions of the 127, and I found it gave a useful speed increase.

As for the X 1/9, I feel that it's more courting than sporting. In order to make the roof detachable, a lot of weight has been added to the floor-pan to retain adequate rigidity. As a result, it's heavier than the 128 saloon and the gears must be used to obtain a useful performance. The mid-engined layout does not seem to confer any handling advantages, but the car attracts many an admiring glance, which is no doubt the object of the exercise. I tested the 2-cylinder 126 twice, and with its new larger engine it is incomparable for nipping through London's traffic.

The introduction of the Ford Fiesta caused a lot of excitement, because it was transverse-engined front-drive car from a firm that has resolutely stuck to the live rear axle. Though its performance is comparable with that of its competitors, the ride is somewhat disappointing and all the half-dozen Fiestas I have tried suffered from body rattles on bad roads. No doubt Fords are working on these shortcomings and I look forward to trying their later versions.

The Honda Accord is the most European of the Japanese cars. With its transverse engine and front-wheel drive, it could well be mistaken for a continental production. The hatchback body has lots of interior space and, surprisingly for a Honda, the 1600cc engine has more torque than revs. The handling and ride are well up to the standard expected of the latest front-drive cars and 94mph is an adequate maximum.

When a smart, yellow Lada 1500 was delivered to my farmhouse, the agricultural population were most impressed. They liked the high ground clearance, the solid construction, and the excellence of the paintwork, not to mention



"Ferraris are always exciting, and the Berlinetta Boxer is the most dramatic of them all."

the elaborate tool-kit. This is the car for the countryman, who expects his vehicle to tow trucks or tractors out of the mud, yet it will achieve an honest 95mph, which is quick for 1452cc.

I tested the Lancia Beta in three forms. These were the High Performance Estate, the Coupé and the mid-engined Monte Carlo. The HPE has a beautifully appointed interior and the tailgate stretches right down to the floor, so loading up with luggage could not be easier. The Coupé has a 7½ins shorter wheelbase and is somewhat lighter, but the performance does not vary greatly, with maxima of 113 and 115mph respectively.

In the case of these two cars, the transversely-mounted 2-litre engine drives the front wheels, but the Monte Carlo has the same transverse unit just ahead of the rear wheels, so it is only a two-seater. Its weight is similar to that of the Coupé but the smaller frontal area gives it a 118mph maximum—these were both fixed-head cars, which are lighter than those with detachable roofs.

The HPE handles very well, though the engine is neither particularly smooth nor silent. The coupé is a really sporting car, with quite hard suspension and a lot of engine noise when pressed; its handling is superb, especially on wet roads. Curiously enough, the Monte Carlo is much quieter and more comfortable than the coupé, though it is hard to tell why, and "my" car was more flexible, with cleaner carburation. On the other hand, the roadholding of the coupé was better on wet roads, especially under the brakes.

It isn't very logical to use a 32cwt car with a 5-litre engine to carry two people and two legless dwarfs. Yet the Maserati Khamsin is a great car, and I loved it more dearly the farther I drove it. That splendid V8 has so much poke, and the body shape is so slippery, that 150mph comes up again and again, even if one isn't really trying. With racing-type suspension, powered steering and brakes by Citroën, and a vast acreage of rubber on the road, the Khamsin handles as well as it goes, and its low-speed flexibility is astonishing.

Thanks to Tom Wheatcroft, I sat in the great Tazio Nuvolari's seat and rushed round Donington in a straight-eight, single-seater Maserati. It was all there, as I had remembered it, the scream of the supercharger, the smell of methanol, and the dancing of the front wheels as the brakes went on. As for that bright red Maserati, with its long, louvred bonnet and polished axles, modern grand prix cars may be faster but they aren't half so beautiful.

The Mazda Hatchback is light and easy to drive, is lavishly equipped, and it will sell like hot cakes, but probably not to the likes of you and me.

Having been driven by Andrew Cowan and Tony Fowkes in their rally cars, I just had to road-test the Mercedes-Benz 280E. Once again, a powerful engine in a light car is the answer, with superb power-assisted steering to reduce driving effort without losing the feel of the road. It's a safe car that handles well, with a lovely 6-cylinder twin-cam engine to make it go, and you can't break it, as Andrew and Tony have proved.

Going from the sublime to the gorblimey let me remember for a moment the fun of driving Peter Agg's Morgan Super Sports Aero 3-wheeler, an experience I would love to repeat, if I could think of a good reason!

I drove a lot of Opels during 1977, both on the road and at the manufacturer's test circuit in Germany. They all handled well, their automatic transmission is one of the best, and the new Rekord is a real good-looker.

The Panther Lima is also a good-looker, but, perhaps almost accidentally, it has turned out to be one of the best open sports cars you can get. At the risk of labouring the point yet again, it works because it is so light. It wouldn't be very exciting with a standard Vauxhall Magnum engine, but that unit, when given the DTV treatment, hands out 160bhp which, in the light Lima, means 0-60mph in 6.6s. In other words, the Lima can out-accelerate almost anything, short of Turbos and Berlinetta Boxers, at a price that is moderate indeed.

The big 4-cylinder engine might be a bit rorty in a saloon, but it's ideal for an open car, like the 30/98 Vauxhall of immortal memory. It rides and handles well, using standard Vauxhall parts, and with a bit of tweaking it could be sensational in these respects, too. With the engine moved right back, the weight distribution is correct, like the Mallalieu Bentley and the Maserati Khamsin. This is not just a fun car as its practical for everyday use, and you can get spares anywhere.

Peugeots are supposed to be unbreakable, which the small 104 ZS proved when a lady wrecked her Mini against its bumper, leaving never a dent. It's a lively little thing, too, and so short that you can park it anywhere.

It was with great excitement that I drove the new Porsche 928 in March. It is a Porsche of the new generation, with a 4.5 litre water-cooled engine in front and the transmission assembly at the rear. Everything is new, from the big V8 to the "Weissach-axle" independent rear suspension, yet the car is already outstandingly refined, and it is an incredible achievement to make all those new things work from the word go. On the road, it runs easily up to 140mph, is quiet and smooth, and can corner phenomenally fast. I await my full-length road-test impatiently, but even in Germany one does not see them about yet.



"Leaving out the £20,000 exotica, I must choose the Scirocco GTI as the car of 1977."

Scirocco tops

continued

The 924 is a 2-litre car of similar configuration. Its low-drag body shape makes a 125mph maximum possible and it handles well. However, the normally quiet engine becomes rough and noisy when pressed and the amount of road noise transmitted into the car is surprising. For

the price asked, one might expect rather more refinement.

Our old friend, the Reliant GTE, was the original sports-estate car, from which such modern examples as the Lancia HPE have been derived. Perhaps it shows its age a little, but it's still pretty quick with its big Ford V6 engine and it handles remarkably safely on wet roads.

I have driven several Renaults, notably the impressive 20TS, of which I am about to carry

"The bodywork is so slippery that 150mph comes up again and again." The Maserati Khamsin.



out a full road-test. However, the little 14 is my present favourite, which I have driven both in France and on a fabulous holiday trip to the Isle of Mull. For a small-engined saloon, the acceleration is amazing, but the suspension is the outstanding feature, especially when one goes North of the Border. With the Renault racing team, I celebrated Bastille night, but that is another story.

The Rover 2600 is, like the curate's egg, good in parts. It's nearly as fast as the 3500 but the engine is noisier than one expects of a new six-cylinder design, and woefully lacking in low-speed torque. It's altogether better made than the earlier 3500 was, but the back seat ride is a bit choppy and I hate that awful steering wheel. I'm sorry, British Leyland, but really . . . !

Just a short comment on the Saab Turbo, which is absolutely outstanding. I drove it fairly briefly in Sweden, but very much hope to make a much longer test soon; it even boosts below 1000rpm, which gives superb flexibility.

I have driven several of the latest Toyotas, of which the new twin-cam Celica is the most interesting, and I have asked for one to be submitted for road test. Watch this space.

Finally, the products of VW and Audi, of which I have driven many examples. Their 1600cc fuel-injection engine is as smooth and quiet as a little turbine, but oh so powerful. I road-tested a Scirocco GTI, and a similarly-powered Golf went magnificently round the Nürburgring. When I say that the handling of both cars was of the same excellence as the engine, that is praise indeed. Leaving out the £20,000 exotica, I must choose the Scirocco GTI as the car of 1977.

The manufacture of motor-cars has never been so competitive, with international rivalry amounting almost to a state of war. I have travelled all over Europe and Scandinavia to drive their new products and, though it is no concern of our readers, I have frittered away many a valuable hour in the sordid confines of various airports. As an antidote, I have spent my few leisure hours working on and driving veteran cars; to drive a 1903 Panhard to Brighton, rebuilding it by the roadside on the way, may sound like hard work, but it's better than a rest if, like me, you're mad about cars.



An artist's impression of a racing 924 for the new series.

Porsche Cars/BARC 924 challenge

The most expensive form of one-make club racing yet seen on British circuits will take place this season for the £8000 Porsche 924 model. The eight-race championship is to be supported by Porsche Cars Great Britain Limited and administrated by the BARC. One-make racing is always close and exciting although the sight of a grid full of fully-silenced, virtually standard Porsche 924s should be something special indeed. Porsche's network of 18 dealers have shown a keen interest which should result in a number of dealer-entered privately-run machines competing on the tracks. The 924 in standard form develops around 110bhp at the wheels from its 2-litre fuel-injected engine and, with the four or five-speed gearbox mounted at the rear, features an excellent 50:50 weight distribution. Dunlop are manufacturing a series of racing tyres for the championship, offering them at a special price, and competitors will be allowed to lower the rear suspension and to fit harder brake pads and linings, the 924 remaining otherwise as sold. The cars could even be driven to the circuits.

The cars should be inexpensive to maintain and Porsche Cars have imposed an absolute limit of 120bhp deliv-

ered at the rear wheels—this effectively limits modifications to polishing the cylinder head and manifolding—any car found by Porsche to exceed this limit will be disqualified from the previous event and forfeit any prize money. The organisers reserve the right to check power outputs in Reading at any time.

Long time partners in Porsche motor racing Shell and Dunlop are co-operating with the series—Shell providing a trophy to the series winner and incorporating the championship in their Gold Star awards scheme while the tyre firm will produce the CR82 racing tyres with an all-weather tread pattern, these being mandatory equipment.

Prize money totals £250 per race, with £100 for a win, while the dealer network are offering a bonus system worth £700 per event.

Dates for the championship are as follows:

May 21, Donington; June 4, Silverstone; June 11, Brands Hatch; June 24, Oulton Park; July 9, Snetterton; July 23, Donington; August 28, Thruxton; October 15, Mallory Park.

Full regulations are available from John Wickham, Competitions Manager of the BARC at Thruxton. Further information can also be obtained from Mike Cotton at PCGB, Reading.

Shut Down

Of interest to all cinema-going motor racing enthusiasts, and drag racing fans in particular, will be the latest offering from GTO Films called *Shut Down*. The 41min film concentrates on two aspects of the sport which are closely linked, racing itself and street rodding, both of which are backed by a soundtrack of hits from the Beach Boys and other leading rodding/surfing-type groups. Action alternates between Santa Pod and the open road, highlight of the former being a superb race sequence of Dave Stone's Stardust and the *Gladiator* Vega of Allan 'Bootsie' Herridge. Other fine action comes from Russ Carpenter's superb Daimler Hemi-powered *Trouble 'n' Stripe*, the Leyland *Drag 'n' Fly*, Al O'Connor's incredible *Al's Gasser* and Big Daddy Garlits in the *King Rat Pro Fueller*.

The street rodding story is amusing and stars Brian Godber, Lydia Lisle and Tim Cook as the 'cool threesome' in the centre of the plot.

Shut Down is currently on release, certificate "U", with *The Choirboys*, an American cops film.

Hardman's 16F

Leicester Mini-racer Don Hardman is turning his hand to Formula Ford 1600 this year with a Crosslé 16F chassis.

Don has shown a good turn of speed in the past couple of years with his tidy Marque Cooper S, but his financial position has severely restricted his number of outings. The Mini will, however, still be seen on the tracks as it has been hired out to another Leicester man (and former autocrosser), David Oates, who will be running it with one of Don's special 1300cc eight-port heads, which he is still manufacturing to order at his Marque Cars premises.

The Crosslé will bear the logos of Modern Toys, who also backed his Mini, while he is building up his own engine, which David Minister has very kindly agreed to brake-test at his Dartford base.

Radio Victory are broadcasting a one-hour programme entitled 'Track Torque' on Thursday, January 26 (today) from 9.30pm until 10.30. Guest in the studio will be John Cooper and listeners with questions will be asked to phone the programme.

Rationalised Racing

For many years, Adrian Reynard of Reynard Cars and Alan Cornock of Royale Racing have felt strongly that there are many small constructors in the motor racing industry, all of whom are using the same basic components but suffer due to their inability to work together in the production of parts and/or cars. They have decided, therefore, that a rationalisation is necessary both to improve the quality of the end product and the company's profitability, and to offer customers a wider range of services than would otherwise be available.

Royale and Reynard will continue to trade as separate organisations for 1978 at least, this being due to each company's current obligations to customers and agents. Royale will continue to produce the successful RP24 FF1600 model but have discontinued the RP25 FF2000, while Adrian will continue to market the beautiful new 78SF having dropped his FF1600 production.

Their first co-operation will be on a new water-cooled SuperVee chassis later in the season.

As Sabre Automotive (another of Reynard's companies) currently manufacture 75 per cent of all fabricated components used in existing Royale Cars, it has been agreed that the two products should be brought into line as closely as possible by using as many common parts from both ranges. For 1979 it is their intention to produce still further in marketing a new range of cars while retaining the individuality of the two marques.

Rory Byrne, although currently engaged on Rad Dougall's Formula 2 project for the coming season, will continue to develop the technical aspects of the current Royale range until a full-time Designer/Development Engineer can be found to replace him. The design team will be headed by Adrian Reynard himself, while Alan Cornock continues to head the marketing division.

Dunlop tyre scheme

Dunlop are once again operating a bonus scheme in several national racing championships throughout 1978. The Great Britain FSV championship winner will receive £250, the runner-up £100 and the third man £50, while the Great Britain FV series will carry a set of Dunlop tyres for the winner. Tyre vouchers will be dispensed to the first four drivers in each round of the Dunlop 'Star of Tomorrow' Championship on a £30, £20, £15, £10 basis, while both FF2000 championships carry an award of £16 for pole position in each round and one of similar value for the fastest

race lap. Finally the RAC Touring Car series is worth £75 to the winner of each round, with £30 for each class winner on a strictly non-cumulative basis.

Bonuses will only be paid, of course, if the competing car displays at least two Dunlop regulation size decals in prominent positions on the car.

It is also hoped that the 1978 European F3 Championship will play a large part in Dunlop's activities, and new sizes and compounds are ready to be tested by a leading team. If the results are encouraging Dunlop will provide a full service at all championship rounds.

What a drag for Leyland



Last season marked Leyland Cars' first involvement with drag racing through their sponsorship of Johnny Whitmore's amazing Drag 'n' fly machine. So impressive have Whitmore's results been that Leyland have decided to increase their support for 1978.

Drag 'n' fly is powered by a 1293cc supercharged and injected nitro-burning engine which has pushed the car into the 9secs bracket on many occasions. As much of Whitmore's success has been in Sweden, where drag racing is rapidly gaining popularity and prize money and prestige is high, the car will have to be fitted with a self-starter to meet new regulations over there. Another 'tweak' for the 1978 season is likely to be the addition of aerofoils at the rear, although the engine and transmission will remain virtually unchanged. The development of Drag 'n' fly should turn it into a superb dragster for the new Super Competition class, for which Leyland and Whitmore are planning a full-scale assault.

Leyland Cars have extended their bonus scheme to include drag racing on a higher level—a sensible decision now that Whitmore and Russ Carpenter especially are going so well in their Leyland-engined rails, proving that it's not only the big American V8s which keep the sport alive.

Arif out in DL20



men, and this with an engine which was by no means 'demon'.

The most pleasing factor of the test day though, for both Arif and Lazenby, was the way the car reacted to all the adjustments made in the pits and the feel of the car on the track. The DL20 clearly enjoyed being powered through the corners and handled very well throughout. "I've driven about 15 different FF1600 marques", said an excited Arif on Monday, "and from the first time I sat in the car I could tell it felt right. The DL20 is a definite winner."

The car handled very predictably in the wet and in the damp session the unique damper-mounting adjustment facility came in to its own—a feature which would allow the handling to be dialled in on the grid in seconds if a sudden downpour should occur on, for example, the warm-up lap. Everything on the car worked well, Wil's expertise with Crosslés in particular being of great help to Hawke in the sorting of the car. Lazenby is hoping to have Arif test the car in dry conditions this week and, if Wil's initial experience of the chassis is anything to go by, Mike Keegan's Southend firm have a flyer on their hands.

If testing continues to go well it would be gratifying to see Hawke give Wil the chance he deserves in a properly set-up works team. Could 1978 be Wil Arif's year?

— a works chance?

bridge Wells driver Wil Arif was in the opportunity to shake-down new David Lazenby-designed Hawke DL20 FF1600 car at Brands Hatch last Saturday, and was extremely impressed with the chassis.

The testing took place first in wet conditions at the Kent circuit and later in a very damp session, Wil being the only driver to have tested the car so far. I commented that the Hawke was very fast in a straight line, as quick if quicker than last year's Van Die-



R.E. Bates in FF1600

Joining Wil Arif back in the ranks of Formula Ford 1600, after an unhappy season of FF2000, is Leicester driver Grahame Tilley. Grahame will continue to be backed by the enthusiastic Leicester builder/shopfitters Roy and Geoff Bates, and will concentrate on the Esso championship and take in as many other championship races as he can with a new Hawke DL19.

The car incorporates all the latest modifications, including revised rear damper locations and solid anti-roll bars, and is fitted with a 1978 specification Scholar engine.

Having proved his competitiveness originally with an immaculate Mini and then two years ago in FF1600 with his Game magazine Crosslé 25F, Grahame hopes to be back with the front-runners again in 1978.

Racing Lothian '78

new motor sport venture has been formed in Edinburgh in which all local enthusiasts are invited to join. Racing Lothian, as the team will be known, aims to encourage local interest in various aspects of the sport, both practical and socially, and secondly to assist local competitors with manpower, workshops team facilities, in fact in any possible.

The plans for 1978 include ownership and racing of at least one car in varied events and another car for members' racing. It is hoped that the team could encompass rallies, circuit racing, karting and motorcycle events if support is forthcoming—organiser Keith Robertson having already obtained the use of spacious premises in Haddington comprising a large workshop and lab room. A partly built 'Thistle Mini' is already waiting to be finished so that activities can begin at once.

The activities of Team Thistle—Keith's similar team back in 1971—were sponsored by a consortium of local businesses while the cars were owned by Robertson's garage company. Sadly, business pressure forced abandonment of the team.

Racing Lothian will be similar but more independent. Its affairs will be managed by its members and financed by advertising sponsors, subscriptions and fund raising activities. When Team Thistle was formed several hundred people turned up—quite overwhelmingly—but this time Robertson is prepared for such an eventuality.

An informal meeting to launch the team is being held at the Tyne House Hotel, Haddington, at 7.30pm on Tuesday, January 31. Everyone is welcome. Keith Robertson can be contacted at Haddington 32554422 if, as a competitor or organiser, or as someone who needs or can give support, you are

New Ceres engines

Ceres (Chris Eccles Racing Engineering Services) of Watford are producing for the coming season engines for FF1600 and FF2000 applications. Prices are expected to be around £870 for the 1600 unit (CE7816) and £1140 for the CE7820 engine. Early applications may take advantage of somewhat cheaper engines by participating in a customer feedback scheme and they, in return, will benefit from a full circuit back-up. They will be responsible for funnelling back any information of interest to Chris Eccles.

Ceres are also building a series of FF1600 motors from reclaimed, fully inspected and tested blocks which will be cheaper still. Anyone engineless for 1978 is invited to contact Eccles on Berkhamsted 6873.

Rallycross DOT Opel

Dealer Opel Team are to enter the world of rallycross with a new 2-litre crossflow engined Kadett GT/E for Mike Hill who has competed regularly in Britain and Europe for the past ten years. In 1971 Hill won the Dutch rallycross championship while an appearance in 1977 netted him second overall in the ATV Champions of Champions televised event at Long Marston. Hill's first outing in the car, which should be immaculately turned out by Peter Kaye and his men in DOT colours, will be at Brands Hatch on

Lucrative R5 series

Renault will again be supporting the BRSCC Renault 5 Elf Challenge in 1978, with increased prize money and an attractive bonus scheme. The 14-round series will have a greater spread of prize money down the field. The winner of each round will receive £35 with money down to £10 for the eighth driver home. End of season awards will be £100, £50 and £25 for the first three drivers overall.

Renault's bonus scheme really is excellent and will offer a £25 voucher to every competitor in every round who qualifies as an official starter, and these can be exchanged at any Renault dealership for service or parts.

Elf are again supporting the series with a bonus scheme which pays £50, £33 and £17 to the leading three drivers

after every third round and after the final event. These are only payable, however, to entrants who contract themselves to Elf.

The new Challenge scoring system operates on a 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis, plus 2 points for fastest lap. The final round constitutes a Super Round with double points for the aggregate of two 15-lap races.

Qualifying rounds for the 1978 BRSCC Renault Elf Challenge are as follows:

March 11, Oulton Park; March 27, Croft; April 3, Donington; April 16, Silverstone; May 1, Castle Combe; May 28, Brands Hatch; June 18, Snetterton; July 8, Oulton Park; July 30, Brands Hatch; August 28, Castle Combe; September 24, Cadwell Park; October 1, Donington; October 8, Croft; October 22, Mallory Park.

Works entries

The BRSCC are encouraging the return of works entries in Championship races by presenting Constructors Cups to the most successful teams in FF1600, FF2000 and Sports 2000 in 1978.

The awards will be for the BRSCC/MCD Townsend Thoresen, Allied Polymer Lords Taverners and SodaStream championships. To be eligible for points, the constructor's name must appear as part of the official entry. Points in each round will be awarded on a 9-6-4-3-2-1 basis.

Peter Browning, in announcing the new awards, told of the promotional advantages for organisers and circuit owners to have official works entries nominated for events, as was the case several years back. It is also valuable, of course, to the constructors themselves in publicising their successes in

FF bonus from Esso

Esso are setting up a bonus scheme for competitors using Esso products in their own Silverstone-based FF1600 championship this year. Financial awards on a race to race basis will be payable over each of the 15 rounds—but competitors must register to be eligible. Drop a line to John Foden, Esso Motor Sport Centre, PO Box 6, Pangbourne, Reading RG8 7AW, Berks, to receive details of the scheme.

The first round of the Grampian Television-supported Scottish Hillclimb Championship, which was due to be held at Kinkell Braes Caravan Site, St Andrews, on March 19 has unfortunately had to be cancelled due to alterations at the venue. The Organisers, St Andrews & DMC hope to run another meeting at Knockhill later in the year as well as the Oulton Park meeting.

Bose back



Dick Griffiths—big promotion.

Bose Hi-Fi's rallycross plans for the UK have finally been announced after a couple of months of speculation as to who would drive for the team. **Bose** UK Ltd have announced that its team drivers will be Wessex Racing's Bruce Bamber and Reading-based driver (and ace team promoter) Dick Griffiths, both of whom have much experience in Minis over the years.

Bose, it will be remembered, made a tremendous impact last year with their Dutch-based team of Porsches and VW Golfs for Dick Riebel, Cees Teurlings, Wil Teurlings and Niek Merks, and will be continuing their policy of total involvement. Their fully equipped double-decker bus hospitality unit will attend all rounds of the Castrol/BTRDA series as well as undertaking pre-event publicity work. A full range of **Bose** Hi-Fi Team accessories including sweat shirts, stickers and posters will also be available.

Griffiths and Bamber will have a pair of 1480cc Wessex Minis together with a G5 Clubman for International events. The team will concentrate on the BTRDA and RAC series with additional support from Castrol and Wessex Racing.

Briefly...

Grampian Television are to repeat their support of the Scottish Hill Climb Championship in 1978. Regulations are now available for the series—all registrations must be received by February 11. Contact the Championship Secretary, Gus Pattison, 72 Galbraith Drive, Milngavie, Glasgow for a copy or phone Ken McEwen (Aberdeen 323246) for details.

The North Oxon CC are promoting their popular Hella Banbury Cross Rally to be held on February 4/5 with start, halfway and finish in Banbury itself. The event is on maps 151, 152 and 164 and the entry fee is £8.50. Regs are available from Trevor Byne, 52 Chetwode, Banbury, Oxon or Mrs J. Witts, 15 Worcester Road, Chipping Norton, Oxon.

Pembrokeshire MC are holding their W. L. Silcox Trophy Rally on January 28/29 starting from the sponsor's premises at Pembroke Dock (MR 158/978 035) and finishing at Dryn Hir, Tenby. Over half of the compact route is over previously unruled roads. The event is intended basically for novice crews. A few entries are still available from Jim Canton. Tel: Camrose 263.

GPS Wheels have recently opened a competition wheel centre in their existing premises at Burton-on-Trent. GPS took over £15,000 of orders for wheels at the recent Douington Speed Show, mainly for export.

Tony wins

Tony Brumskill, who has fought a lone battle for many years to gain national publicity and support for his belief that we should be taking youngsters as soon as possible and training them to drive firstly and to rally drive, secondly, finally came up trumps as he filmed with 'BBC Nationwide' just before Christmas at Brands Hatch with four of his 'pupils' aged twelve to sixteen.

During those two days the cameras rolled on Tony instructing the youngsters to drive two cars: his last season's Chrysler Avenger and a specially supplied and adapted TVR sportscar. TVR, the very exclusive sportscar manufacturers from Blackpool are helping Tony in his efforts to organise his ideas nationwide by loaning one of their multi-thousand pound cars into which they have built every possible safety device and specially adapted the seats and pedals with diminutive drivers in mind: TVR put an average twelve-year-old in a shell and started from there!

Tony believes that we should train them young just as we used to do with soccer players, rugby stars, tennis champions etc., so that we can ensure that a British driver takes all the International credit and wins behind the wheel of a British car in the future. That is important for the sport, for the motor industry and the country as a whole. He also believes there are vital safety spin offs in that youngsters learn to drive safely and well before they are let loose on our roads at seventeen with ridiculously little experience in real car handling. As Tony says: "It is not surprising there are so many accidents, some fatal, among young drivers and that their insurance premiums are therefore so phenomenally high as the only thing they have to do to pass a test and then be able to drive a powerful car on the roads is to drive at under 30mph, in daylight, in a built-up area; it's madness!"

Tony, who is a Housemaster and the English Master at Rossall Junior School, Fleetwood, has literally thousands of children waiting to be trained as the publicity in the local and national press, on local television, plus a long feature on 'BBC Pebble Mill at One' last summer started a flood of letters from as far afield as the north of Scotland and Jersey—there were even some from abroad!

"Now I have a properly prepared car through the generosity of TVR Sports cars, and hopefully more support once the 'Nationwide' film is shown this month so I will be able to expand the scheme I have already got under way to train youngsters on a nationwide basis. Then I will be able to meet all the enthusiastic children (and their enthusiastic parents!) who write and write, and write, and . . . If I can see a British driver at the wheel of a British car winning major rallies in the future, and if I can prevent even but one young road death by my training, I will regard the effort as being supremely worthwhile!"

Due to unforeseen circumstances, regis for the Pembrokeshire MC's Harrison Allen Trophy Rally have only just become available. The closed status 140-mile rally will take place on February 18/19, starting at Greens Motors, Haverfordwest. It will cover choice rallying roads on maps 145/157/158 using digital timing and utilising a couple of selectives to sort out competitors. Regulations can be obtained from Paul Quinn, 22 Pembroke Road, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. Tel: Haverfordwest 5677 (Home) or Pembroke 4084 (Business). Marshals are also invited to contact Quinn at the above numbers.

NDRC presentations



Above: Liz Burn, husband Ollie (second from right) and the Lizard crew receive the coveted Gauloises prize for their 'Pro Comp' title win. Below: Jim Whiting and his girlfriend Beverley Cox receive the 'Best Appearing Car and Crew' award—and who could dispute part of the judges' decision?



The Holiday Inn at Swiss Cottage reverberated to the sound of 300 members and guests having a high time at the National Drag Racing club's annual presentations night on Saturday, January 21.

Principal champions were Liz Burn who as reported last week took the prestigious Gauloises-NDRC 'Pro comp' title, being recipient of a beautiful silver dish plus £450 in addition to the Gauloises prize money won during the season. Liz swept the board for the 'Sperex-NDRC ladies' award too which was a fine Swedish glass decanter.

Jim Whiting, NDRC Overall Champion for 1977, found himself inundated with coveted trophies, for besides the points and junior modified awards, his 'Silent Knight' team were accorded the Watford Motor Accessories 'best appearing car and crew' cup.

Pleasantly, Steve Johnson, second time winner of the RAC National Drag Racing Championship, had his championship tray presented in front of his drag racing peers by RAC's Neil Eason-Gibson although, of course, he had already received it once at Pall Mall.

A full season of race meetings for 1978 was announced by NDRC Executive President, Alan Wigmore. He was also delighted to confirm the continued participation of Gauloises Cigarettes in sponsoring their Pro Competition championship—the third year of the series and again with an increase in value to £3,500.

racers in the modified classes are to benefit from a brand new championship worth £500 to the winner and runner-up which announces the co-involvement of Tony Vanderputte Ltd and Total Oil.

People came a long way to enjoy the most popular social event of the drag racing season. Among the personalities it was thought at first that Frederick and Giselle Krux of the German Drag Racing Association had travelled furthest, but during the presentations a message came to postpone till later in the evening Colin Brackett's 'Senior Modified Champion' award. He had been stranded in New York's blizzard but hoped to be on the first plane out. At the height of festivities, around 1am, Colin was duly presented with his trophy among the loudest of cheers for his long distance effort! If qualifying for an event was ever left to the last moment, that was it!



Contributor Colin Taylor enjoyed an excellent day's sport with the best second round overall.

Bossom Impunity

The sporting trials contenders for the RAC and Semperit/BTRDA Championships joined the local Pit Stop Southern Brigade last Sunday on the infamous slopes of Boxley for the Maidstone and Mid-Kent Motor Club's Bossom Trophy Trial. After a night full of rain, the chalky heights of the North Downs presented a tricky recipe served under clearing skies that blossomed into a super day which the Maidstone Club worked hard to match. Although there were only eight hills they were long enough to give value for money and test competitors to the full. Of the thirty starters, Julian Fack led after the first round with a sizzling 36, followed by Alan Brunning in his home made Renault propelled special with the Ibex of John Hopkins both on 42, the breed leader Gordon Jackson and herd master Lee Chappell were close behind on 47, the same score as Jack Pearce. Roy Lane retired his Techcraft and was later joined by the evergreen Sid Seelly. The old Cannon of Colin Taylor stopped at a five on one hill as the clutch linkage broke, but a piece of Fack welding rod soon had the vital bits in action. Ibex builder in chief Ken Harrison drove his mount with growing confidence and surprised a few before the end of the day.

The second round was a continuation

affair with the grip becoming easier. The mothball smelling chariot of Colin Taylor made best with 24 followed by the Allen brother's—Reg and Dennis—on 27 in their two machines one ahead of fellow Kincraft driver Jack Pearce with Gordon Jackson 29. On 30 Julian Fack kept the lead and Alan Brunning 31 and John Hopkins 32 stayed in the hunt. Jeremy Bassett drove well to record 31. Chris Highwood, Lee Chappell, Tony Mitcham, George Fisher and Jack Murrell were all going well but a few unfriendly markers kept them down the line.

After lunch the final round saw Julian Fack clinch the day with the best round of 21, one better than Gordon Jackson who took second place in a close contest. Reg Allen also on 22 was third and John Hopkins taking a 28 finished fourth. Colin Taylor 27 took the 1300 class and ended up fifth with Alan Brunning. Lee Chappell retired and Cyril Gamblen took the 950 class. Semperit M401 Radials were worn by all the winners which must have pleased the Sponsors and Pit Stop flags were well to the fore.

1. Julian Fack/Meg Marrion (Impunity), 87 marks lost; 2. Gordon Jackson/Tony Le-Gras (Ibex), 98; 3. Reg Allen/Jane Brise (Kincraft), 101; 4. John Hopkins/Peter Mitcham (Ibex), 102; 5. Colin Taylor/Daphne Taylor (Cannon), 103; 5. Alan Brunning/Ray Berry (Trialmaster), 103.

Honcord wins again

With the championship points now so close, nearly all the cars registered with the N. Ireland club turned out to contest this January 14 round at Finnebrogue, Co Down, on the land of well-known rallyman David Lindsay.

Due to the lack of rain and any really steep sections, tests had been set up with accuracy in mind and it was this very factor which cost Liam Scott the overall win he now so badly needs.

Clive Gracey, having broken his diff on the rough tests on New Year's Eve, was out with a new geared back axle and seemed to find his car much more manageable as was borne out by his second position at the end of the day.

But once again the man to watch was Nelson Todd who with monotonous regularity has taken more firsts than anyone except Mervyn Glover during his 13 years in trials. Glover on the other hand has not really got to grips with the Facksimile car of Brian Emerson which he is using this year.

After two laps the score sheet read Todd six marks lost, Scott six, Gracey seven, Wilbert Todd 13 and Drew Wylie 15 so the top three were really going to have to keep the pressure on.

Superb Craven Clubmans

After leading virtually from start to finish Pete Johnson/Geoff Richards brought their Escort RS2000 in nearly seven minutes clear of the rest of the field on the Craven Clubmans Rally held on January 14/15, 1978. The event starting from Fairford and finishing in Moreton-in-Marsh was an LCAMC and ACSMC qualifier covering 180 miles on maps 150, 151 and 163 and was therefore well subscribed with all the previous year's leading championship contenders present.

The early part of the route involved a loop north from the start with pre-plot navigation, bringing competitors back to the start for first petrol. Several leading crews experienced problems however with Dave O'Brien/Nick Verney losing valuable time with a wrong slot very early on. Len Willis/John MacNeill retired their Avenger and Eric Nosek/Nigel Evans came to grief, unfortunately with the local constabulary close at hand. This caused the route to be blocked for some considerable time, resulting in the subsequent time control being cancelled. After a very rough first selective at Whelford petrol was taken on and only seconds separated the leading six crews.

Unfortunately Bob Grant/Tony Hardware were to get no farther in their Escort RS2000 as electrical problems put them out at the restart control. The middle selection of the event was to claim further victims as John Case/Bob Shutter retired their Escort and Derek Skinner/Tony Pettie put the infamous MGB GT plum in the ditch at the 90° left on the Fairford white. At this stage Pete Johnson/Geoff Richards were pulling out a lead over Roland

Shepherd/Mike Wise and Dave O'Brien/Nick Verney who were really flying along to get back in contention for the lead. Peter Johnson/Graham Dore managed to put their Escort TC in a ditch just before TC14 and took several minutes pushing themselves out, a problem which was to lose them second place in the final count. Following the third selective, a fine affair through Chedworth and Withington Woods, petrol was taken on at Andoversford. Results here showed that Johnson/Richards were still clear from Shepherd/Wise, O'Brien/Verney and Dick Mauger/Dick Steptoe.

The real high point of this superb event was, to follow in the last 60-mile section—which was virtually all competitive motoring through some roads unused for many years, such as Guiting Woods and Lower Harford, particularly as the fog was beginning to descend. Unfortunately O'Brien/Verney were to retire in the ford just after Guiting Woods with a broken halfshaft and Mauger/Steptoe had the misfortune to obtain two punctures and had to retire. This left the way open for expert crew D. Johnson/P. Tilling to push their Saab 99 into the top three after a very spirited run through the late controls, despite police activity around the Condicote area.

After a short run into the finish results were produced very quickly and awards presented by 8.30 concluding what must be one of the best events of the year.

1. Pete Johnson/Geoff Richards (RS2000), 37m 40s; 2, Roland Shepherd/Mike Wise (RS2000), 44m 33s; 3, D. Johnson/P. Tilling (Saab 99), 45m 40s; 4. Peter Johnson/Graham Dore (Escort) TC, 46m 14s; 5, N. Flowers/R. Dix (RS1600) 47m 17s.

Two crews clean

A not as map marker board caused problems for many crews last Saturday when Carlton & Dist MC ran their Wadham-Stringer Lincolnshire Chase rally over a 145 mile route in Notts and Lincolnshire and eventually only two crews finished without a dreaded fail on their cards.

After leading all night—they pulled out a three minute lead in the first half—Dave Willows and W. McDonald won the event in an Avenger on 5mins from Steve Parker and Jim Lock in an Escort 1300. Only one minute separated the next two crews with Stuart Teather/John Beedham (RS2000) beating Jim Short/C. Booth (Escort 1300). One of the few mixed crews on the

event Guy Fairweather and Mrs Christine Hopper would have been third in their Escort but they picked up a fail but in unusual fashion. They missed what was regarded as one of the easiest marker boards for they were overtaking a non-competing vehicle as they swept past the board.

Two crews who were going well at half time, Tim and Henry Taylor (Escort TC) and Trevor Robinson/Dave Swan (Escort TC), retired with water pump failure and a broken alternator respectively.

1. Dave Willows/W. McDonald (Avenger), 5m; 2. Steve Parker/Jim Lock (Escort 1300), 9m; 3, Stuart Teather/John Beedham (RS2000), 1F 7m; 4, Jim Short/C. Booth (Escort 1300), 1F 8m; 5, Graham Phillipott/Richard Lumb (Mexico), 1F 16m; 6, J. Clifton/L. Allsop (Skoda), 1F 22m.

Misty Marsh

Although he lost some time near the 33rd time control, when he slid into a ditch and blocked the road for some minutes, Lyle Cathcart and Mike Cockle still managed to win the Marsh Mist Rally, run by SWL MC last Saturday night by almost five mins.

In their Firenza they dropped 19m 41s on the 126 mile route containing 36 controls and one selective all run in Kent and using the Romney Marshes to a great extent. Second were Terry Friday and Paul Beeson in their BMW 2002 on 24m 6s and third were Struan Robertson/Peter Singleton (Simca Rallye), on 25m 51s. Last year's winner Mick Rushbrook was going well until he collected a fail near the end which dropped him to 13th. The event was around of the ASEMCE championship.

1. Lyle Cathcart/Mike Cockle (Firenza), 19m 41s; 2. Terry Friday/Paul Beeson (BMW 2002), 24m 6s; 3, Struan Robertson/Peter Singleton (Simca Rallye), 25m 51s; 4, John Carly/David Jones (RS2000), 28m 1s; 5, Julian Morley/Neil Davidson (RS2000), 29m 47s; 6, Barry Laver/Jeremy Amis (Escort 1600), 29m 59s; Novice: Ray Miles/Charles Verrall (Mini), 4F 54m 56s. Best SWL: Alan Huggett/Dave Patten (Avenger), 45m 58s.

First Trentham

Trentham Gardens, near Stoke-on-Trent, is a possibility as a stage for this year's RAC and Jim Porter was on hand last Sunday to view the potential of the site when Potteries & Newcastle MC became the first motor club to run an event within the grounds.

Their stages event, which comprised five routes run twice, produced 35 crews to tackle some 15 miles of competition mainly on tarmac but with shale and grass in places. Winners, by 34 secs, were Malcolm Byrom and Mike Roper in their RS1700 who had a total of 466s with Geoff and Nina Davies second in their RS1800 on 500s. Byrom led after the first two stages which saw Tony Walker in front but he dropped back as the day wore on and did not feature in the final half dozen places.

1. Malcolm Byrom/Mike Roper (Escort 1700), 466s; 2, Geoff and Nina Davies (RS1800), 500s; 3, Les Cotton/Miss Kathleen Lovatt (Ascona), 524s; 4. Jim McCubbin/Dave Barlow (RS2000), 535s; 5. David Evans/John Savage (Saab 95), 537s; 6, Gary Pappas/Peter Syrett (Avenger), 545s; 7. Charles Verrall (Mini), 550s. Mixed crews: Tony Walker/Mrs Kath Barber (Escort), 550s.

Spencer Mk2

Bill Moffatt, former RAC and BTRDA Production Car Trials champion made his long awaited return last weekend but he did not manage to take away the major award on the Owen Motoring Club's Snowy Mountain Trial at Hamstall Ridware, near Rugeley.

That glory went to Ian Spencer, son of former double champion Geoff Spencer who has decided to retire. Driving the Cooper S in which his father gained so many awards Spencer junior took advantage of an early number and stormed away to a comfortable victory on 43 marks and his index was comfortably better than that of Moffatt, in an Imp, who won his class.

Steve Thompson, former racing man, made his annual appearance in an Opel Kadett GTE which Mike Stephens will use in championship events, and came from behind to win the front engined rwd class by just three marks while Ray Warrington (Cooper S), won the Mini battle from Dave Smith by six marks.

Overall: Ian Spencer (Cooper S), 43 marks. Class winners: Ray Warrington (Cooper S), 61 marks; Steve Thompson (Kadett GTE), 128 marks; H. Lucas (Sprite), 158 marks; Bill Moffatt (Imp), 96 marks. **Best Owen:** John Thompson (Kadett City), 148 marks. **Novice:** Gwilym Jones (Mexico), 152 marks.

Wet Monte

Quick, wet and windy—that was the tale of last Saturday's Tyre Services Monte Rally run by Haldon MC and at the end of the 150 mile route in mid-Devon the tie decider had to be brought in to determine the winners.

In the first half three crews reached the petrol halt on equal penalties and the battle in the second half developed into a struggle between Chris Wathen and John Sampson. Wathen, in an RS2000 belonging to Vospers of Plymouth, had Roger Gillard with him while Sampson in his 1400 Mini had Brian Benson alongside and these two continued to match each other all the way with the result that at the finish they tied on 35m. However, Sampson lost the event as early as the third control where he dropped his first minute.

The third crew in contention at half time Bob Lock and Mike Hall (Escort TC) finished way down the list of 23 finishers when they went out of a control in the wrong direction and were penalised accordingly. The severity of the first half can be judged by the fact that only 14 crews were fail free at petrol.

1. Chris Wathen/Roger Gillard (RS2000), 35m; 2. John Sampson/Brian Benson (Mini), 35m; 3. Dave Pitcher/Tony Greenwood (BMW 2002), 40m; 4. Dave Adams/Ralph Yelland (Mexico), 44m; 5. Rod Wilshire/Roger Hunt (Kadett GTE), 48m; 6. M. Spring/M. Thomson (Mexico), 53m. **Novices:** Tony Howell/John Hoare (Mexico), 58m. **Best Haldon:** Keith Scriver/Peter Ewings (Mini), 2F 63m.



Howard Davies and Phil Jones plunge their Gibbs Bros of Tredegar Escort through a Ford on the way to victory.

Snow cuts Traders

Howard Davies and Phil Jones won the second round of the Welsh Road Rally Championship last weekend when they finished just over a minute ahead of Geoff Kitney and Alan McCann to add the Ross & Dist MC's Traders Trophy Rally to their collection.

Seventy-one crews turned out for the 190 mile event which contained two fairly long selectives and the route was made tougher by non-stop rain during the first half which had to be cut slightly before the start because of the snow from the previous couple of days. Based mainly in central south Wales the rally used Capel-y-Fin near Hay, the south face of Gilwern Hill and The Darren north west of Abergavenny which had not been utilised for some time.

With one selective in each half which proved to be toughest in the first half when 23 crews failed to get to petrol, a

lot reported to have retired with water problems. Davies and Jones held the lead almost from the start in their RS2000 and kept a wary eye on Geoff Kitney and Alan McCann in their similar RS2000 with whom they ran in close company most of the night. The margin was 1m 27s.

Last year's winner Andy Chambers found his RS2000 not quite on full song and he and Miles Bailey had to settle for third almost four mins off the pace but a long way ahead of the fourth crew. On the credit side to the organisers the results were up within half an hour of the last car finishing.

1. Howard Davies/Phil Jones (RS2000), 43m 30s; 2. Geoff Kitney/Alan McCann (RS2000), 44m 57s; 3. Andy Chambers/Miles Bailey (RS2000), 48m 49s; 4. R. Rees/P. Maynard (RS2000), 56m 42s; 5. B. Tovey/L. Carter (Escort 1600), 57m 8s; 6. Geoff Okell/John Kiff (RS2000), 57m 16s. **Semi-experts:** R. Edwards/A. Minther (Escort 1600), 64m 55s. **Novices:** G. Reed/R. Thwaites (Imp), 1F 112m 28s.

55 entries on Hallen

A total of 16 Land-Rovers and one Austin Champ in a special class for four-wheel-drive vehicles boosted the entry at Cambridge Car Club's Hallen Trophy Trial to 55.

Conventional vehicles tackled six tests three times at Godmanchester Common on Sunday, January 15. The four-wheel-drive class had to attempt extra tests in the wettest part of the field.

But in spite of the extra time tests it was still the Land-Rovers which ended the day with least penalties. Two of them tied for lowest score with seven points apiece. But the verdict went to Michael Collings' 1997cc example on

furthest cleanest from Colin Cowley's 2256cc vehicle.

The overall award for best performance on index went to an (almost) conventional car. Steve Strutt, in an 1100cc Mini with 12-inch front wheels, dropped no penalties at all during the afternoon sections to gain a single point lead over his class rival John Gray in a similar car.

Strutt's 13-point total was only equalled by specials class winner Glyn Jackson.

BP: Steve Strutt (Mini 1100cc), 13 points. **Class winners:** John Gray (Mini 1100cc), 14pts; Tim Fraser (Midget 1275cc), 32pts; Bob Rule (VW Beetle 1600cc), 37pts; Glyn Jackson (Glyncraft), 13pts; Michael Collings (Land-Rover 1997cc), 7pts.

BRANDS HATCH

Nearly a hundred of the country's top rallycross exponents will converge on Brands Hatch this Sunday for the first round of the prestigious 1978 Castrol/BTRDA Rallycross Championship. With a total prize fund of £6,000 at stake in the series competition is going to be really tough in the battle for the premier awards and, of course, the largest slice of the financial reward. As usual the top Escorts and Minis have entered and these make up by far the largest proportion of the entry on Sunday. Escorts are represented by the likes of Trevor Hopkins, George and Ian Warren, Graham Hathaway, Les Lock and Clive Trueman while the horde of Minis are headed, at number 1, by reigning champion Trevor Reeves who is backed up by the Bose Hi-Fi Team cars of Dick Griffiths and Bruce Bamber on their team debut, Gordon Rogers' in his indecently fast green example, the car of David Angel (a very experienced rallycrosser of whom we have not seen much in the last couple of years) and Bruce Male who appears to have a choice of two cars. Providing variety in the huge entry will be the VW Beetles of Peter Harrold and John Button (2.0 and 2.7-litres respectively), Rob Gibson's Ford-engined Sprite, the Saab 99s of Will Gollop, Brian Stabler and Mike Harrison, Roger Burn's Clan Crusader, John Mackley's Allegro, Paul Northall in his Downie TR7, the Opel Kadett GT/E of Mike Hill, David Schelt's circuit racing/sprint/rallycross Lancia Fulvia, the Anglia of Colin Sainsbury, Peter Storton's Imp, Colin Slaughter in the Colin Cars Skoda RS130, Jeff Jarman is out in his Riley Elf and Terence Pettet brings out his ungainly Fiat 124 again. But, should conditions be dry, who can challenge the ex-Bose Porsche of Rod Chapman, winner here at the last meeting? John Clark, similarly mounted, will be out there trying but there again, if the conditions decide to be wet and slimy any of the Minis, and especially those of Champion Reeves, Devon driver Rogers and no doubt Griffiths and Bamber will take a lot of beating. Late news has filtered through that Barry Lee has entered too! He will surely be in line for honours again.

For the first time ever at a Brands Hatch rallycross event, competitors will be based in the F1 paddock behind the pits and spectators purchasing paddock transfers will be able to spectate from the paddock too, thus affording an excellent view of the cars on the tarmac and on the loose sections at each end of the circuit. Practice starts at 9.30am with times runs from 11.30.

● Gordon Francis and Phil Derbyshire were elected to the Council of the BTRDA at their AGM at Solihull last Sunday, which was followed by the annual luncheon and prizegiving attended by more than 200.



International events

Date
Jan 29
Jan 29

Venue
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Wigram, New Zealand

Event
Brazilian Grand Prix—World Championship for Drivers & Manufacturers round 2
Peter Stuyvesant Formula Atlantic Series—G2, FF

British events

Date	Venue
Jan 28-29	Sutton Road, Mansfield
Jan 28-29	East Dean Motoring Centre, Eastbourne (MR199-558979)
Jan 28-29	Nr Frome
Jan 28-29	Burton Service Area, M6 (MR87-520759)
Jan 29	Brands Hatch Circuit, nr Fawkham, Kent
Jan 29	Tideswell, Derby, (MR119-152782)

Event	Status	Club	Start	Details
Rally	—	Dukeries MC	23.00	Ystrad Rally—Road Rally
Rally	R	Eastbourne & Ram MC	21.01	Downs Rally
Rally	R	Pegasus MC	24.00	Orion Rally
Rally	C	Kirkby Lonsdale MC	23.31	Joe Goodwin January Rally
Rallycross	R	BRSCC	11.30	—
Sporting Trial	R	N Midlands MC	10.30	Kilchling Trophy Trial—Serpent/BTRDA & RAC Championship



Engineered for your safety by Saab-Scania of Sweden.

SAAB
One of the world's finer cars

SAAB (Gt. Britain) Ltd, Fieldhouse Lane, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 1LY. Tel. Marlow 6377